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CARLYLE'S ESSAY
ON
SIR WALTER SCOTT

EDITED WITH AN INTRODUCTION & NOTES
BY
ARNOLD SMITH, M.A.

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INTRODUCTION

In a letter from Thomas Carlyle to his brother Dr. Carlyle (12th December, 1837) he writes: "and so *Scott* is done (on Wednesday night last): and they profess great satisfaction with it;—and—it will bring me in somewhat like fifty pounds; that is the only use of it. I have been 'sharp' on Scott, but 'mannerly'; condemnatory, commiseratory, not irreverent. I wrote in great chagrin and plague; my deaf ear made as if my head had been wooden; catarrhs, November fogs like Erebus:—but in short, it is *done;* and my nerves are coming back to their old tone again."

Carlyle and *The Westminster Review.*

The essay on Scott was written for *The London and Westminster Review* at the request of John Stuart Mill, with whom Carlyle was at that time on terms of intimate friendship—a friendship that had not been weakened by the accident which had cost Carlyle the first volume of *The French Revolution*, lent to Mill and burnt through Mill's inadvertence in March, 1835. "Is there anything that I could do or suffer or say to alleviate you?" Carlyle had written on the day after hearing

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the news; "for I feel that your sorrow must be far sharper than mine." Carlyle had kept no copy of the burnt MS.; but he finished *The French Revolution* towards the end of 1836, and after that "joy of being freed from the ugliest labour I ever went through since I knew the world," [1] he had done some lecturing on German literature, in 1837, and then, towards the end of the year, had proposed to Mill an "engagement of some permanence, we will say for a year," [2] as a contributor to Mill's *Review*. This proposal Mill was unable to accept. The essay on Scott, however, which had already been promised, was completed; it appeared in the *Review* in January, 1838. Carlyle received £45: "really, it is enough," he says in a letter to Dr. Carlyle.[3] With characteristic disparagement of his own work, he describes the essay, in another letter to Mill, as "the thing on Scott; very bad." [4]

The subject of the essay was one for which Carlyle had, as he tells us in the essay itself, "small inward vocation." He had written in his *Journal* (1831): "To me he [Scott] is and has been an object of very minor interest for many, many years. The novelwright of his time, its favourite child, and *therefore* an almost worthless one." Again: "Are we" (*Diary*—December 3rd, 1826) "wiser,

Lack of "inward vocation" for the subject.

[1] Letter to Mrs. Aitken, 29th December, 1836.
[2] Letter to Mill, 30th October, 1837.
[3] 1st February, 1838. [4] 8th December, 1837.

better, holier, stronger" after reading Scott? "No, we have been amused." To Carlyle the popularity of Scott was a symptom of the moral sickness of an age—"destitute of faith and terrified at Scepticism" —which chose him "to solace its dead tedium and manifold sorrows a little," and paid him with money and fame. Solace and amusement were not, in Carlyle's opinion, what the age required. It needed a Teacher. Such a teacher Carlyle had himself found in Goethe, under whose guidance he had won a victory over his own "scepticisms, agonising doubtings, fearful wrestlings with the foul and vile and soul-murdering Mud-gods"[1] of the epoch. But in this warfare Scott was no leader to follow—was unconscious that any warfare of the kind was needed. Hence, partly, Carlyle's "small inward vocation."

Carlyle and Scott: differences of temperament, aim and outlook.

Between Scott and Carlyle there were essential differences of temperament, aim and outlook. Scott was a man who, as the saying is, "had no nerves." He told Captain Basil Hall at Abbotsford that he had once arrived at an inn, and, because there was no other sleeping accommodation, he had lain down in a room where there was a corpse, and "never had a better night's sleep" in his life. This physical perfection of nerve, accompanied by other kinds of insensitiveness (Scott was extraordinarily indifferent to unpleasant odours),

[1] *Reminiscences*, Vol. I. 287–8.

is in striking contrast to the sensitive, highly strung temperament of Carlyle, often tortured by insomnia for the slightest reason, or for no reason at all. Corresponding to these differences of nervous constitution, and in great measure dependent on them, were other differences which the world regards as moral: the irritability of Carlyle issuing in gloom and depression and acerbity; the placidity of Scott, in sunniness of disposition, unfailing good-temper, and general lovableness. Again, there were differences of aim. A man who enjoys life with so much zest as Scott has no call to become a martyr or a prophet. He had a good time himself and he set himself to give other people a good time. He always found some merit in every man and made allowances for the faults and weaknesses of all; his self-command scarcely allowed any unfavourable opinion to pass his lips; his principle was "by every means to banish from his mind all angry feelings of every description."[1] His noble disposition, in short, was to please. Carlyle's disposition was also noble; but, seeing the world as he saw it, he felt it to be his business to chide it, to revile its materialism, and to threaten it with retribution. But differences of temperament and aim do not of themselves lead to antipathy. The obstacle to any bond of sympathy between Scott and Carlyle lay in an essential difference of outlook. Scott accepted

[1] Captain Basil Hall's *Journal*, quoted by Lockhart.

the standards of his class; he was entirely conventional in his political and religious views and in the value he attached to material success: Carlyle was entirely original, an independent thinker in politics and religion, and a fierce despiser of what the world called respectability, and he himself, "gigmanity."

Carlyle's view of Biography and opinion of Lockhart.

Respectability—an undue deference to what other people say and think—was the fault which Carlyle had to find with most biographies. "On the whole," he writes in a letter to Mill,[1] "few Englishmen can make the smallest attempt at writing Biography: they are a poor mode-ridden and otherwise hag-ridden people, hunting after Respectability, in perpetual terror of missing it; and so write, as they do all other things, in a state of partial paralysis." This, however, was not a fault of Lockhart's *Life of Scott*, which gave strong offence by the author's treatment of the Ballantynes, Scott's business partners, and provoked a controversy as to the extent of Scott's responsibility for his own failure. The faults that Carlyle had to find with the *Life* were its length and diffusiveness, and its tendency to idolise Scott. The judgment of posterity, however, has not confirmed Carlyle's verdict on the *Life* as a mere compilation, though "a compilation well done." The power of its characterisation, especially in the portraits of the Ballantynes,

[1] 19th November, 1832.

of Constable, and of Scott himself; and the picture, intensely vivid and dramatic, which it gives of Scott's financial ruin and tremendous effort to conquer fate, make it one of the most interesting of biographies, and it stands, in the opinion of the *Dictionary of National Biography*, in a position only second to Boswell's immortal *Life of Johnson*. What Carlyle in this essay says of biography may be compared with what he says in his essay on Burns :

> If an individual is really of consequence enough to have his life and character recorded for public remembrance, we have always been of opinion, that the public ought to be made acquainted with all the inward springs and relations of his character. How did the world and man's life, from his particular position, represent themselves to his mind? How did co-existing circumstances modify him from without; how did he modify these from within? With what endeavours and what efficacy rule over them; with what resistance and what suffering sink under them? In one word, what and how produced was the effect of society on him; what and how produced was his effect on society?

Within the limits of a biographical essay, this is what Carlyle himself attempts.

The "interpretative" method of criticism.

Carlyle's critical method is unlike that which was customary in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The critical writings of the period presumed the superiority of the critic to the author criticised. The former sat in judgment on the latter. He weighed his performance in the scales against preconceived notions of what

the author ought to have attempted. If the verdict were favourable he assigned to him his rank in the republic of Letters; if unfavourable he passed sentence of condemnation, often accompanied by virulent abuse. This judicial attitude, from which Carlyle's great contemporary Macaulay is not entirely free, and which rendered so many critical utterances of the *Edinburgh*, the *Quarterly*, and *Blackwood's* as odious as they were ridiculous, is not Carlyle's attitude. He stands in the forefront of a new school of critics whose object is to find out an author's purpose and to see how far with the means at his disposal he has attained it. The method of the new school is interpretative. It seeks the hidden springs and subtle motives. It requires, therefore, not only knowledge but sympathy: "not to sympathise is not to understand."

Carlyle and Burns.

We cannot be surprised that Carlyle felt a certain reluctance in undertaking to write about Scott, and that this essay is hardly so favourable an example of his powers as his essay on Burns. He cannot say of Scott as he says of Burns: "We love and we pity him." To Burns he was drawn by many outward and inner ties. As he sat writing at Craigenputtock, not many miles from the farm-house where Burns was born, he could remember that he and Burns both came of peasant stock, he could reflect on the harsh poverty which both had suffered, he

could think of his own struggles and disappointments, his own hopes, and the powers which were hitherto unappreciated outside the circle of his intimate friends. He saw in Burns the *Vates*, the inspired Bard, and, with a sense of his own prophetic mission, he could expect from the world no better treatment than the inspired poet or the inspired prophet commonly receives. "It has ever, we fear, shown small favour to its Teachers; hunger and nakedness, perils and revilings, the prison, the cross, the poison-chalice have in most times and countries, been the market price it has offered for wisdom, the welcome with which it has greeted those who have come to enlighten and purify it." [1] When, afterwards, in London, he came to write about Scott, he was confronted by a very different picture. Scott had delighted the world, and the world had honoured him—with wealth, with a title, and with respectful sympathy in misfortune: the frigate placed at his disposal for the last sad voyage in search of health a significant symbol of its regard.

Interpretation of Scott's popularity.

Carlyle remarks that Scott's popularity, indeed, "was of a select sort rather; not a popularity of the populace," merely. He attributes it (the remark applies equally to the novels, though it is made about the metrical romances) first, to the "half-life" of the time and Scott's vigorous

[1] *Essay on Burns.*

whole life; secondly, to the fact that the romances made "no call for effort on the reader's part": the reader could satisfy an instinctive craving with the minimum of effort. The novels were "like a newly-discovered continent in Literature, for the new century, a bright El Dorado." The fact could not have been more happily expressed. In that age, one figure alone in the splendour of literary fame could be compared to Scott. On Byron also, and the effect he had upon his generation, Carlyle has made a searching and profound remark. That effect was likewise due to an instinctive craving—"to feelings which arise from passion incapable of being converted into action"—a craving which Byron satisfied. An industrial civilisation, with a population engaged in humdrum labour and denied an outlet for its active and creative impulses, seeks an emotional satisfaction in other directions. In that period it found them in the prose of Scott and the poetry of Byron. Thus both men were representative of tendencies of their time, Scott of its *Götzism*,[1] Byron of its *Werterism*[1]—to use the words which Carlyle has coined to indicate the romanticism and the sentimentalism of the period. With what Carlyle says of Scott's influence on an age "destitute of faith and terrified at Scepticism" we may compare Ruskin's opinion of Scott as "the epitome of his epoch" and his statement that it was

[1] Page 75 and note.

pre-eminently in Scott's "faults and weaknesses" that he was "the representative of the mind of his age." [1]

Carlyle and Ruskin: Scott's merits as a writer.

Carlyle describes the novels as "the perfection of extemporaneous writing" and regards Scott's love of beauty as his highest title to greatness. Scott, he says, had an extraordinary power of resuscitating the past; he showed that "history was made by living men." The incredible rapidity with which he wrote his novels, without re-touching, has been described for us by Lockhart. *Ivanhoe*, *The Monastery*, *The Abbot*, and *Kenilworth* were "the fruits of scarcely more than twelve months' labour," which he performed in the intervals of business (his duties as a Clerk of Session occupying him for "six hours daily during rather less than six months out of the twelve"), and in the midst of a round of social pleasures. This ease of writing is no small mark of greatness, as Ruskin has pointed out in *Modern Painters*, in a passage [2] which should be compared with the critical estimate made by Carlyle. The love of beauty which Scott displayed particularly in his descriptions of landscape, and which is combined with the wistful sadness, peculiarly modern, of his attitude to Nature, is, in Ruskin's opinion, one of those characteristics which make him the special

[1] *Modern Painters*, Vol. III. Ch. XVI.
[2] *Ibid.*

representative of his age, another being the antiquarianism that reflected, and in part created, the taste of a period which was forming a habit of "looking back, in a romantic and passionate idleness, to the past ages." Thus far Carlyle and Ruskin are at one. But Carlyle believed Scott's fame to be ephemeral. He looked upon the novels as mere provision of amusement. "The sick heart will find no healing here, the darkly-struggling heart no guidance: the Heroic that is in all men no divine awakening voice." They were without spiritual purport. Scott had "no message whatever to deliver to the world." To Carlyle greatness implied an ability to wrestle with the "Mystery of Existence" and to extort an answer. Ruskin, on the other hand, thought that "the greatest thing a human soul ever does in this world is to *see* something, and tell what it *saw* in a plain way." To him Scott is chiefly great, not for ease of writing, or for beautiful description of landscape, or for his antiquarianism, but for his story-telling. Invention, which Carlyle underrated, is for Ruskin the proof of highest faculty; and for this reason: "that to invent a story, or admirably and thoroughly tell any part of a story, it is necessary to grasp the entire mind of every personage concerned in it, and to know precisely how they would be affected by what happens; which to do requires a colossal intellect." [1]

[1] *Modern Painters*, Vol. III. Ch. XVI.

We may also compare what Ruskin and Carlyle have said about Scott's power of delineating character. For the views of the former, the student is referred to the well-known discussion, in *Sesame and Lilies*, of Scott's heroes and heroines. Carlyle's opinion on this subject is particularly interesting because of his own extraordinary power of picturesque description, shown in such studies as those of Mirabeau, Danton, and Robespierre in *The French Revolution*, or that wonderful pen-portrait of Coleridge in the *Life of John Sterling*. He denies to Scott's characters the highest excellence. "Your Shakespeare fashions his characters from the heart outwards; your Scott fashions them from the skin inwards, never getting near the heart of them!" Probably the reader feels that this criticism is true of what may be called the main characters, the heroes and heroines (these words being used in the conventional sense); but it is rather in the minor characters, those which Scott, as it were, studied from life, on his travels to and fro in the Border country, that the greatest realism and truth to nature are found.

Scott's character.

Of no critic can it be said more truly than of Carlyle that "the free judgments which he passed on men and things were part of himself."[1] One of the most significant things in the essay is the way in which he dwells on Scott's healthiness, that

[1] Froude.

harmony and balance of mind and body in which he himself was so lamentably deficient and which Scott, with his vast powers of work and keen enjoyment of life, so conspicuously possessed: "An eminently well-conditioned man, healthy in body, healthy in soul; we will call him one of the *healthiest* of men." There is more in this remark than appears at first sight. In his essay entitled *Characteristics* Carlyle had written: "The truly strong mind, view it as Intellect or Morality, or under any other aspect, is nowise the mind acquainted with its strength; . . . here as before the sign of health is Unconsciousness." In writing about Scott, it was this unconsciousness, which was shown in Scott's indifference to fame, that appeared to him the most praiseworthy trait in his character. Scott, Lockhart tells us, always said that literary fame "was a bright feather in the cap, but not the substantial cover of a well-protected head." And we are helped to understand this indifference—which seems in such a genius extraordinary humility—by another remark in which Carlyle shows his great critical acumen: he describes Scott as possessing the spirit of his freebooter ancestors, as being very much the kind of man the old fighting Borderer was, as being a man who "with the foray-spear would have acquitted himself as he did at the desk with his pen." Scott, in fact, wished to live his romance, not merely to write it. The writing was a means to an end. His thoughts

were centred in an ambition which was not literary. He wished to found another great branch of his family and to leave to his heirs a noble estate.

This brings us to another matter: the worldliness which Carlyle decries. He depicts Scott at Abbotsford "writing daily with the ardour of a steam-engine, that he might make £15,000 a year, and buy upholstery with it." There is some slight exaggeration here, but not more than is required to give point to a really striking saying. It may be, indeed, admitted that Scott wished to amass wealth for no ignoble purpose, "that he was not aiming at vulgar display, but at discharging what he took to be a most important social function: protecting his dependants, and supporting his superiors; helping innumerable poor friends and distressed authors; taking an active part in all patriotic movements, and diffusing the most genial goodwill throughout the whole circle of his influence." [1] But it remains true that the spectacle of the commercial transactions which led to Scott's ruin is not admirable. He saw "the apparently earth-built pillars of his worldly fortune shattered in ruin merely because, not contented with being the first author of his age, he had chosen also to be his own printer and his own bookseller." [2] Moreover, it has

[1] Leslie Stephen: *The Story of Scott's Ruin* (*Studies of a Biographer*, Vol. II.).

[2] Lockhart.

transpired that Scott was not quite so much imposed upon by his partners in Ballantyne & Company as Lockhart would have us believe. For some years, indeed, he was himself "Ballantyne & Co."[1] The picture of the favourite of fortune who kept strict account of his pence and squandered his pounds, or, rather, his thousands of pounds, is one to excite wonder.

The Hero as Man of Letters.

But more wonderful still is the story of the heroism with which Scott faced the failure of his hopes and set himself to pay the creditors of the firm with which he had so unwisely associated himself. Carlyle has a noble passage on this in the essay; yet he hardly does justice to the subject. The firm of Constable, whose crash had brought Ballantyne's down, paid 1*s.* 3*d.* in the pound. The debts of Ballantyne & Co. amounted to £117,000. Scott determined to pay off this sum with his pen, sacrificing health and life in the struggle; and though he died with his purpose only partly achieved the creditors of Ballantyne & Co. in the end were paid in full. If one had to point out "the hero as man-of-letters" it would be hard to find a more splendid example. Carlyle, who had shown such heroism himself when the manuscript of his *French Revolution* was burnt, and who admired so keenly the rugged heroism of Johnson, might, one thinks, have found more of the heroic in Scott. But perhaps Scott was

[1] Leslie Stephen, *The Story of Scott's Ruin.*

too near to him to be clearly seen. Carlyle rarely appreciated his contemporaries.

After all, it is for Carlyle himself, not for his critical estimate of Scott, that we read this essay. The student is advised to form his or her own estimate of Carlyle's style. Minor points to notice are the indirect, yet well-connected, method of narrative, the close development of paragraphs, the sometimes unusual structure of sentences, the unusual words, the allusiveness, the emphasis, the use of capitals and hyphens, and the figurative expressions—especially the use of metaphor. Of greater importance is the treatment of the theme. Like everything that Carlyle wrote, the essay is a sermon on life, earnest, sincere, startling with abrupt flashes of lightning-like discernment, thunderous with vehement denunciation, now ironic, now tender, full of sympathy with human suffering, impressed with the mystery of human lot; sometimes the writer is soliloquising, sometimes addressing the reader directly, always preaching with magnificent eloquence, and in a style of extraordinary originality, the message which he felt himself appointed to deliver. That message is expressed in many forms. One of the most significant is contained in his essay entitled *Goethe's Portrait*, in which he quotes the great German's saying: *Gedenke zu leben.* "Yes, 'think of living'! Thy life, wert thou the 'pitifulest of all the sons of earth,' is no idle

Carlyle's style. His message to his age.

dream, but a solemn reality. It is thy own; it is all thou hast to front eternity with. Work, then, even as he has done, and does,—' Like a star, unhasting, yet unresting.'—*Sic valeas.*"

The preaching of this lesson made Carlyle the great moral force of his generation : there is inspiration still to be drawn from it in ours.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

The essay on Scott appeared in No. XII and LV of Vol. VI and XXVIII of *The London and Westminster Review* (January, 1838), the double numeration signifying that the volume was the sixth of *The London Review* and the twenty-eighth of *The Westminster*, these Reviews having been amalgamated. The essay was a review of J. G. Lockhart's *Memoirs of the Life of Sir Walter Scott, Baronet* (Vols. I–VI. Cadell. Edinburgh, 1837). It was afterwards reprinted in *Critical and Miscellaneous Essays*, 1st edition, 4 vols. 1839; 2nd edn. 5 vols. 1840; 3rd edn. 4 vols. 1847; and, in 1857, in Vol. V. of the 1st collected edition of Carlyle's works. The "final" edition is that of the collected works (1869–71). Between the *Westminster Review* article and the essay as printed in book form there are considerable differences in punctuation, use of capitals, and use of hyphens in compound words; there are also small differences in the text. The paragraphing is practically the same in the *Westminster Review* article and in the earlier book editions, but considerable changes in this respect were made in the "final" edition (1869); apart from this and minor matters of punctuation and spelling, there is no difference between the texts of the book editions.

In the present edition are indicated all the alterations which were made in the text after the appearance of the essay in *The London and Westminster Review*, except in regard to capitalisation, punctuation, use of hyphens, and the correction of misprints and spelling mistakes—which it is unnecessary to note specially. The paragraphing of the earlier editions has been retained, the new paragraphing being indicated at the foot of each page. To the book editions of the essay Carlyle appended a summary, which is not here given. He also added a few notes, of which all are retained which would be of any help to the reader. The punctuation and other typographical peculiarities of Carlyle's English have been scrupulously retained.

CARLYLE'S ESSAY ON SIR WALTER SCOTT

American Cooper asserts, in one of his books, that there is 'an instinctive tendency in men to look at 'any man who has become distinguished.' True, surely: as all observation and survey of mankind, from China to Peru, from Nebuchadnezzar to Old Hickory, will testify! Why do men crowd towards the improved-drop at Newgate, eager to catch a sight? The man about to be hanged is in a distinguished situation. Men crowd to such extent, that Greenacre's is not the only life choked-out there. Again, ask of these leathern vehicles, cabriolets, neat-flies, with blue men and women in them, that scour all thoroughfares, Whither so fast? To see dear Mrs. Rigmarole, the distinguished female; great Mr. Rigmarole, the distinguished male! Or, consider that crowning phenomenon, and summary of modern civilisation, a *soirée* of lions. Glittering are the rooms, well-lighted, thronged; bright flows their undulatory flood of blonde-gowns and dress-coats, a soft smile dwelling on all faces; for behold there also flow the

lions, hovering distinguished: oracles of the age, of one sort or another. Oracles really pleasant to see; whom it is worth while to go and see: look at them, but inquire not of them, depart rather and be thankful. For your lion-*soirée* admits not of speech; there lies the specialty of it. A meeting together of human creatures; and yet (so high has civilisation gone) the primary aim of human meeting, that soul might in some articulate utterance unfold itself to soul, can be dispensed with in it. Utterance there is not; nay there is a certain grinning play of tongue-fence, and make-believe of utterance, considerably worse than none. For which reason it has been suggested, with an eye to sincerity and silence in such lion-*soirées*, Might not each lion be, for example, ticketed, as wine-decanters are? Let him carry, slung round him, in such ornamental manner as seemed good, his silver label with name engraved; you lift his label, and read it, with what farther ocular survey you find useful, and speech is not needed at all. O Fenimore Cooper, it is most true there is 'an instinctive tendency in 'men to look at any man that has become distinguished;' and, moreover, an instinctive desire in men to become distinguished and be looked at!

For the rest, we will call it a most valuable tendency this; indispensable to mankind. Without it, where were star-and-garter, and significance of rank; where were all ambition, money-getting, respectability of

gig or no gig; and, in a word, the main impetus by which society moves, the main force by which it hangs together? A tendency, we say, of manifold results; of manifold origin, not ridiculous only, but sublime;—which some incline to deduce from the mere gregarious purblind nature of man, prompting him to run, 'as 'dim-eyed animals do, towards any glittering object, 'were it but a scoured tankard, and mistake it for a 'solar luminary,' or even 'sheep-like, to run and crowd 'because many *have* already run'! It is indeed curious to consider how men do make the gods that themselves worship. For the most famed man, round whom all the world [1] rapturously huzzahs and venerates, as if his like were not, is the same man whom all the world was wont to jostle into the kennels; not a changed man, but in every fibre of him the same man. Foolish world, what went ye out to see? A tankard scoured bright: and do there not lie, of the self-same pewter, whole barrowfuls of tankards, though by worse fortune all still in the dim state?

And yet, at bottom, it is not merely our gregarious sheep-like quality, but something better, and indeed best: what has been called 'the perpetual fact of 'hero-worship;' our inborn sincere love of great men! Not the gilt farthing, for its own sake, do even fools covet; but the gold guinea which they mistake it for. Veneration of great men is perennial in the

[1] Westm. inserts *now*.

nature of man; this, in all times, especially in these, is one of the blessedest facts predicable of him. In all times, even in these seemingly so disobedient times, 'it remains a blessed fact, so cunningly has Nature 'ordered it, *that whatsoever man ought to obey, he* '*cannot but obey*. Show the dullest clodpole, show 'the haughtiest featherhead, that a soul higher than 'himself is actually here; were his knees stiffened 'into brass, he must down and worship.' So it has been written; and may be cited and repeated till known to all. Understand it well, this of 'hero-worship' was the primary creed, and has intrinsically been the secondary and ternary, and will be the ultimate and final creed of mankind; indestructible, changing in shape, but in essence unchangeable; whereon polities, religions, loyalties, and all highest human interests have been and can be built, as on a rock that will endure while man endures. Such is hero-worship; so much lies in that our inborn sincere love of great men!—In favour of which unspeakable benefits of the reality, what can we do but cheerfully pardon the multiplex ineptitudes of the semblance; cheerfully wish even lion-*soirées*, with labels for their lions or without that improvement, all manner of prosperity? Let hero-worship flourish, say we; and the more and more assiduous chase after gilt farthings while guineas are not yet forthcoming. Herein, at lowest, is proof that guineas exist, that they are believed to exist,

and valued. Find great men if you can; if you cannot, still quit not the search; in defect of great men, let there be noted men, in such number, to such degree of intensity as the public appetite can tolerate.

Whether Sir Walter Scott was a great man, is still a question with some; but there can be no question with any one that he was a most noted and even notable man. In this generation there was no literary man with such a popularity in any country; there have only been a few with such, taking-in all generations and all countries. Nay, it is farther to be admitted that Sir Walter Scott's popularity was of a select sort rather; not a popularity of the populace. His admirers were at one time almost all the intelligent of civilised countries; and to the last included, and do still include, a great portion of that sort. Such fortune he had, and has continued to maintain for a space of some twenty or thirty years. So long the observed of all observers; a great man, or only a considerable man; here surely, if ever, is a singularly circumstanced, is a 'distinguished' man! In regard to whom, therefore, the 'instinctive tendency' on other men's part cannot be wanting. Let men look, where the world has already so long looked. And now, while the new, earnestly expected *Life* 'by his son-in-law 'and literary executor' again summons the whole world's attention round him, probably for the last

time it will ever be so summoned; and men are in some sort taking leave of a notability, and about to go their way, and commit him to his fortune on the flood of things,—why should not this Periodical Publication likewise publish its thought about him? Readers of miscellaneous aspect, of unknown quantity and quality, are waiting to hear it done. With small inward vocation, but cheerfully obedient to destiny and necessity, the present reviewer will follow a multitude: to do evil or to do no evil, will depend not on the multitude but on himself. One thing he did decidedly wish; at least to wait till the Work were finished: for the Six promised Volumes, as the world knows, have flowed over into a Seventh, which will not for some weeks yet see the light.[1] But the editorial powers, wearied with waiting, have become peremptory; and declare that, finished or not finished, they will have their hands washed of it at this opening of the year. Perhaps it is best. The physiognomy of Scott will not be much altered for us by that Seventh Volume; the prior Six have altered it but little;—as, indeed, a man who has written some two-hundred volumes of his own, and lived for thirty years amid the universal speech of friends, must have already left some likeness of himself. Be it as the peremptory editorial powers require.

[1] Westm. *It will tell us, say they, little new and nothing pleasing to know.*

First, therefore, a word on the *Life* itself. Mr. Lockhart's known powers justify strict requisition in his case. Our verdict in general would be, that he has accomplished the work he schemed for himself in a creditable workmanlike manner. It is true, his notion of what the work was, does not seem to have been very elevated. To picture-forth the life of Scott according to any rules of art or composition, so that a reader, on adequately examining it, might say to himself, "There is Scott, there is the physiognomy and meaning of Scott's appearance and transit on this earth; such was he by nature, so did the world act on him, so he on the world, with such result and significance for himself and us:" this was by no manner of means Mr. Lockhart's plan. A plan which, it is rashly said, should preside over every biography! It might have been fulfilled with all degrees of perfection, from that of the *Odyssey* down to *Thomas Ellwood* or lower. For there is no heroic poem in the world but is at bottom a biography, the life of a man: also, it may be said, there is no life of a man, faithfully recorded, but is a heroic poem of its sort, rhymed or unrhymed. It is a plan one would prefer, did it otherwise suit; which it does not, in these days. Seven volumes sell so much dearer than one; are so much easier to write than one. The *Odyssey*, for instance, what were the value of the *Odyssey* sold per sheet? One paper of *Pickwick;* or say, the incon-

siderable fraction of one. This, in commercial algebra, were the equation: *Odyssey* equal to *Pickwick* divided by an unknown integer.

There is a great discovery still to be made in Literature, that of paying literary men by the quantity they *do not* write. Nay, in sober truth, is not this actually the rule in all writing; and, moreover, in all conduct and acting? Not what stands aboveground, but what lies unseen *under* it, as the root and subterrene element it sprang from and emblemed forth, determines the value. Under all speech that is good for anything there lies a silence that is better. Silence is deep as Eternity; speech is shallow as Time. Paradoxical does it seem? Woe for the age, woe for the man, quack-ridden, bespeeched, bespouted, blown about like barren Sahara, to whom this world-old truth were altogether strange!—Such we say is the rule, acted on or not, recognised or not; and he who departs from it, what can he do but spread himself into breadth and length, into superficiality and saleability; and, except as filigree, become comparatively useless? One thinks, Had but the hogs-head of thin wash, which sours in a week ready for the kennels, been *distilled*, been concentrated! Our dear Fenimore Cooper, whom we started with, might, in that way, have given us one *Natty Leatherstocking*, one melodious synopsis of Man and Nature in the West (for it lay in him to do it), almost as a Saint-Pierre did for the

Islands of the East; and the hundred Incoherences, cobbled hastily together by order of Colburn and Company, had slumbered in Chaos, as all incoherences ought if possible to do. Verily this same genius of diffuse-writing, of diffuse-acting, is a Moloch; and souls pass through the fire to him, more than enough. Surely, if ever discovery was valuable and needful, it were that above indicated, of paying by the work *not* visibly done!—Which needful discovery we will give the whole projecting, railwaying, knowledge-diffusing, march-of-intellect and otherwise promotive and locomotive societies in the Old and New World, any required length of centuries to make. Once made, such discovery once made, we too will fling cap into the air, and shout, "*Io Pæan!* the Devil *is* conquered;" —and, in the *mean* while, study to think it nothing miraculous that seven biographical volumes are given where one had been better; and that several other things happen, very much as they from of old were known to do, and are like to continue doing.

Mr. Lockhart's aim, we take it, was not that of producing any such highflown work of art as we hint at: or indeed to do much other than to print, intelligibly bound together by order of time, and by some requisite intercalary exposition, all such letters, documents and notices about Scott as he found lying suitable, and as it seemed likely the world would undertake to read. His Work, accordingly, is not so much a com-

position, as what we may call a compilation well done. Neither is this a task of no difficulty; this too is a task that may be performed with extremely various degrees of talent: from the *Life and Correspondence of Hannah More*, for instance, up to this *Life of Scott*, there is a wide range indeed! Let us take the Seven Volumes, and be thankful that they are genuine in their kind. Nay, as to that of their being seven and not one, it is right to say that the public so required it. To have done other, would have shown little policy in an author. Had Mr. Lockhart laboriously compressed himself, and instead of well-done compilation, brought out the well-done composition, in one volume instead of seven, which not many men in England are better qualified to do, there can be no doubt but [1] his readers for the time had been immeasurably fewer. If the praise of magnanimity be denied him, that of prudence must be conceded, which perhaps he values more.

The truth is, the work, done in this manner too, was good to have: Scott's Biography, if uncomposed, lies printed and indestructible here, in the elementary state, and can at any time be composed, if necessary, by whosoever has a call to that. As it is, as it was meant to be, we repeat, the work is vigorously done. Sagacity, decision, candour, diligence, good manners, good sense: these qualities are throughout observable.

[1] Westm. *that.*

The dates, calculations, statements, we suppose to be all accurate; much laborious inquiry, some of it impossible for another man, has been gone into, the results of which are imparted with due brevity. Scott's letters, not interesting generally, yet never absolutely without interest, are copiously given; copiously, but with selection; the answers to them still more select. Narrative, delineation, and at length personal reminiscences, occasionally of much merit, of a certain rough force, sincerity and picturesqueness, duly intervene. The scattered members of Scott's Life do lie here, and could be disentangled. In a word, this compilation is the work of a manful, clear-seeing, conclusive man, and has been executed with the faculty and combination of faculties the public had a right to expect from the name attached to it.

One thing we hear greatly blamed in Mr. Lockhart: that he has been too communicative, indiscreet, and has recorded much that ought to have lain suppressed. Persons are mentioned, and circumstances, not always of an ornamental sort. It would appear there is far less reticence than was looked for! Various persons, name and surname, have 'received pain:' nay the very Hero of the Biography is rendered unheroic; unornamental facts of him, and of those he had to do with, being set forth in plain English: hence 'personality,' 'indiscretion,' or worse, 'sanctities of 'private life,' &c. &c. How delicate, decent is English

Biography, bless its mealy mouth! A Damocles' sword of *Respectability* hangs forever over the poor English Life-writer (as it does over poor English Life in general), and reduces him to the verge of paralysis. Thus it has been said, 'there are no English lives 'worth reading except those of Players, who by the 'nature of the case have bidden Respectability good-'day.' The English biographer has long felt that if in writing his Man's Biography, he wrote down anything that could by possibility offend any man, he had written wrong. The plain consequence was, that, properly speaking, no biography whatever could be produced. The poor biographer, having the fear *not* of God before his eyes, was obliged to retire as it were into vacuum; and write in the most melancholy, straitened manner, with only vacuum for a result. Vain that he wrote, and that we kept reading volume on volume: there was no biography, but some vague ghost of a biography, white, stainless; without feature or substance; *vacuum*, as we say, and wind and shadow, —which indeed the material of it was.

No man lives without jostling and being jostled; in all ways he has to *elbow* himself through the world, giving and receiving offence. His life is a battle, in so far as it is an entity at all. The very oyster, we suppose, comes in collision with oysters: undoubtedly enough it does come in collision with Necessity and Difficulty; and helps itself through, not as a perfectly

ideal oyster, but as an imperfect real one. Some kind of remorse must be known to the oyster; certain hatreds, certain pusillanimities. But as for man, his conflict is continual with the spirit of contradiction, that is without and within; with the evil spirit (or call it, with the weak, most necessitous, pitiable spirit), that is in others and in himself. His walk, like all walking (say the mechanicians), is a series of *falls*. To paint man's life is to represent these things. Let them be represented, fitly, with dignity and measure; but above all, let them be represented. No tragedy of *Hamlet* with the part of Hamlet omitted by particular desire! No ghost of a biography, let the Damocles' sword of Respectability (which, after all, is but a pasteboard one) threaten as it will! One hopes that the public taste is much mended in this matter; that vacuum-biographies, with a good many other vacuities related to them, are withdrawn or withdrawing into vacuum. Probably it was Mr. Lockhart's feeling of what the great public would approve, that led him, open-eyed, into this offence against the small criticising public: we joyfully accept the omen.

Perhaps then, of all the praises copiously bestowed on his Work, there is none in reality so creditable to him as this same censure, which has also been pretty copious. It is a censure better than a good many praises. He is found guilty of having said this and that, calculated not to be entirely pleasant to this

man and that; in other words, calculated to give him and the thing he worked in a living set of features, not leave him vague, in the white beatified-ghost [1] condition.[2] Several men, as we hear, cry out, "See, there is something written not entirely pleasant to me!" Good friend, it is pity; but who can help it? They that will crowd about bonfires may, sometimes very fairly, get their beards singed; it is the price they pay for such illumination; natural twilight is safe and free to all. For our part, we hope all manner of biographies that are written in England will henceforth be written so. If it is fit that they be written otherwise, then it is still fitter that they be not written at all: to produce not things but ghosts of things can never be the duty of man. [3] The biographer has this problem set before him: to delineate a likeness of the earthly pilgrimage of a man. He will compute well what profit is in it, and what disprofit; under which latter head this of offending any of his fellow-creatures will surely not be forgotten. Nay, this may so swell the disprofit side of his account, that many an enterprise of biography, otherwise promising, shall require to be renounced. But once taken up, the rule before all rules is to do *it*, not to do the ghost of it. In speaking of the man and men he has to deal with, he will of course keep all his charities

[1] Westm. *beatified ghost-condition.* [2] Westm. *Let it be so.*
[3] 1869, new par.

about him; but all his eyes open. Far be it from him to set down aught *untrue;* nay, not to abstain from, and leave in oblivion, much that is true. But having found a thing or things essential for his subject, and well computed the for and against, he will in very deed set down such thing or things, nothing doubting, —*having*, we may say, the fear of God before his eyes, and no other fear whatever. Censure the biographer's prudence; dissent from the computation he made, or agree with it; be all malice of his, be all falsehood, nay be all offensive avoidable inaccuracy, condemned and consumed; but know that by this plan only, executed as was possible, could the biographer hope to make a biography; and blame him not that he did what it had been the worst fault not to do.

As to the accuracy or error of these statements about the Ballantynes and other persons aggrieved, which are questions much mooted at present in some places, we know nothing at all. If they are inaccurate, let them be corrected; if the inaccuracy was avoidable, let the author bear rebuke and punishment for it. We can only say, these things carry no look of inaccuracy on the face of them; neither is anywhere the smallest trace of ill-will or unjust feeling discernible. Decidedly the probabilities are, and till better evidence arise, the fair conclusion is, that this matter stands very much as it ought to do. Let the clatter of censure, therefore, propagate itself as far as it can. For Mr. Lock-

hart it virtually amounts to this very considerable praise, that, standing full in the face of the public, he has set at nought, and been among the first to do it, a public piece of cant; one of the commonest we have, and closely allied to many others of the fellest sort, as smooth as it looks.

The other censure, of Scott being made unheroic, springs from the same stem; and is, perhaps, a still more wonderful flower of it. Your true hero must have no features, but be white, stainless, an impersonal ghost-hero! But connected with this, there is a hypothesis now current, due probably to some man of name, for its own force would not carry it far: That Mr. Lockhart at heart has a dislike to Scott, and has done his best in an underhand treacherous manner to dishero him! Such hypothesis is actually current: he that has ears may hear it now and then. On which astonishing hypothesis, if a word must be said, it can only be an apology for silence, —"That there are things at which one stands struck silent, as at first sight of the Infinite." For if Mr. Lockhart is fairly chargeable with any radical defect, if on any side his insight entirely fails him, it seems even to be in this, that Scott is altogether lovely to him; that Scott's greatness spreads out for him on all hands beyond reach of eye; that his very faults become beautiful, his vulgar worldlinesses are solid prudences, proprieties; and of his worth there is no measure.

Does not the patient Biographer dwell on his *Abbots*, *Pirates*, and hasty theatrical scene-paintings; affectionately analysing them, as if they were Raphael-pictures, time-defying *Hamlets*, *Othellos?* The Novel-manufactory, with its 15,000*l.* a-year, is sacred to him as creation of a genius, which carries the noble victor up to Heaven. Scott is to Lockhart the unparalleled of the time; an object spreading-out before him like a sea without shore. Of *that* astonishing hypothesis, let expressive silence be the only answer.

And so in sum, with regard to *Lockhart's Life of Scott*, readers that believe in us shall read it with the feeling that a man of talent, decision and insight wrote it; wrote it in seven volumes, not in one, because the public would pay for it better in that state; but wrote it with courage, with frankness, sincerity; on the whole, in a very readable, recommendable manner, as things go. Whosoever needs it can purchase it, or purchase [1] the loan of it, with assurance more than usual that he has ware for his money. And now enough of the written *Life;* we will glance a little at the man and his acted life.

Into the question whether Scott was a great man or not, we do not propose to enter deeply. It is, as too usual, a question about words. There can be

[1] Westm. omits *purchase*.

no doubt but many men have been named and printed *great* who were vastly smaller than he : as little doubt moreover that of the specially *good*, a very large portion, according to any genuine standard of man's worth, were worthless in comparison to him. He for whom Scott is great may most innocently name him so ; may with advantage admire his great qualities, and ought with sincere heart to emulate them. At the same time, it is good that there be a certain degree of precision in our epithets. It is good to understand, for one thing, that no popularity, and open-mouthed wonder of all the world, continued even for a long series of years, can make a man great. Such popularity is a remarkable fortune ; indicates a great adaptation of the man to his element of circumstances ; but may or may not indicate anything great in the man. To our imagination, as above hinted, there is a certain apotheosis in it ; but in the reality no apotheosis at all. Popularity is as a blaze of illumination, or alas, of conflagration, kindled round a man ; *showing* what is in him ; not putting the smallest item more into him ; often abstracting much from him ; conflagrating the poor man himself into ashes and *caput mortuum !* And then, by the nature of it, such popularity is transient ; your 'series of years,' quite unexpectedly, sometimes almost all [1] on a sudden, terminates ! For the stupidity of men, especially of men congre-

[1] Westm. omits *all.*

gated in masses round any object, is extreme. What illuminations and conflagrations have kindled themselves, as if new heavenly suns had risen, which proved only to be tar-barrels and terrestrial locks of straw! Profane Princesses cried out, "One God, one Farinelli!"—and whither now have they and Farinelli danced? [1] In Literature too there have been seen popularities greater even than Scott's, and nothing perennial in the interior of them. Lope de Vega, whom all the world swore by, and made a proverb of; who could make an acceptable five-act tragedy in almost as many hours; the greatest of all popularities past or present, and perhaps one of the greatest men that ever ranked among popularities: Lope himself, so radiant, far-shining, has not proved to be a sun or star of the firmament; but is as good as lost and gone out; or plays at best in the eyes of some few as a vague aurora-borealis, and brilliant ineffectuality. The great man of Spain sat obscure at the time, all dark and poor, a maimed soldier; writing his *Don Quixote* in prison. And Lope's fate withal was sad, his popularity perhaps a curse to him; for in this man there was something ethereal too, a divine particle traceable in few other popular men; and such far-shining diffusion of himself, though all the world swore by it, would do nothing for the true life of him even while he lived: he had to creep into a convent,

[1] 1869, new par.

into a monk's cowl, and learn, with infinite sorrow, that his blessedness had lain elsewhere; that when a man's life feels itself to be sick and an error, no voting of bystanders can make it well and a truth again. [1] Or coming down to our own times, was not August Kotzebue popular? Kotzebue, not so many years since, saw himself, if rumour and hand-clapping could be credited, the greatest man going; saw visibly his Thoughts, dressed-out in plush and pasteboard, permeating and perambulating civilised Europe; the most iron visages weeping with him, in all theatres from Cadiz to Kamtchatka; his own 'astonishing 'genius' meanwhile producing two tragedies or so per month: he, on the whole, blazed high enough: he too has gone out into Night and *Orcus*, and already is not. We will omit this of popularity altogether; and account it as making simply nothing towards Scott's greatness or non-greatness, as an accident, not a quality.

Shorn of this falsifying *nimbus*, and reduced to his own natural dimensions, there remains the reality, Walter Scott, and what we can find in him: to be accounted great, or not great, according to the dialects of men. Friends to precision of epithet will probably deny his title to the name 'great.' It seems to us there goes other stuff to the making of great men than can be detected here. One knows not what

[1] 1869, new par.

idea worthy of the name of great, what purpose, instinct or tendency, that could be called great, Scott ever was inspired with. His life was worldly; his ambitions were worldly. There is nothing spiritual in him; all is economical, material, of the earth earthy. A love of picturesque, of beautiful, vigorous and graceful things; a genuine love, yet not more genuine than has dwelt in hundreds of men named minor poets: this is the highest quality to be discerned in him. [1] His power of representing these things, too, his poetic power, like his moral power, was a genius *in extenso*, as we may say, not *in intenso*. In action, in speculation, *broad* as he was, he rose nowhere high; productive without measure as to quantity, in quality he for the most part transcended but a little way the region of commonplace. It has been said, 'no man has written as many volumes 'with so few sentences that can be quoted.' Winged words were not his vocation; nothing urged him that way: the great Mystery of Existence was not great to him; did not drive him into rocky solitudes to wrestle with it for an answer, to be answered or to perish. He had nothing of the martyr; into no 'dark region to slay monsters for us,' did he, either led or driven, venture down: his conquests were for his own behoof mainly, conquests over common market-labour, and reckonable in good metallic coin

[1] 1869, new par.

of the realm. The thing he had faith in, except power, power of what sort soever, and even of the rudest sort, would be difficult to point out. One sees not that he believed in anything; nay he did not even disbelieve; but quietly acquiesced, and made himself at home in a world of conventionalities; the false, the semi-false and the true were alike true in this, that they were there, and had power in their hands more or less. It was well to feel so; and yet not well! We find it written, 'Woe to them that are at 'ease in Zion;' but surely it is a double woe to them that are at ease in Babel, in Domdaniel. On the other hand, he wrote many volumes, amusing many thousands of men. Shall we call this great? It seems to us there dwells and struggles another sort of spirit in the inward parts of great men!

Brother Ringletub, the missionary, inquired of Ram-Dass, a Hindoo man-god, who had set up for godhood lately, What he meant to do, then, with the sins of mankind? To which Ram-Dass at once answered, He had *fire enough in his belly* to burn-up all the sins in the world. Ram-Dass was right so far, and had a spice of sense in him; for surely it is the test of every divine man this same, and without it he is not divine or great,—that he *have* fire in him to burn-up somewhat of the sins of the world, of the miseries and errors of the world: why else is he there? Far be it from us to say that a great man must needs,

with benevolence prepense, become a 'friend of 'humanity;' nay that such professional self-conscious friends of humanity are not the fatalest kind of persons to be met with in our day. All greatness is unconscious, or it is little and nought. And yet a great man without *such* fire in him, burning dim or developed, as a divine behest in his heart of hearts, never resting till it be fulfilled, were a solecism in Nature. A great man is ever, as the Transcendentalists speak, possessed with an *idea*. [1] Napoleon himself, not the superfinest of great men, and ballasted sufficiently with prudences and egoisms, had nevertheless, as is clear enough, an idea to start with: the idea that Democracy was the Cause of Man, the right and infinite Cause. Accordingly he made himself 'the armed Soldier of Demo-'cracy;' and did vindicate it in a rather great manner. Nay, to the very last, he had a kind of idea; that, namely, of '*La carrière ouverte aux talens*, The tools 'to him that can handle them;' really one of the best ideas yet promulgated on that matter, or rather the one true central idea, towards which all the others, if they tend anywhither, must tend. Unhappily it was in the military province only that Napoleon could realise this idea of his, being forced to fight for himself the while: before he got it tried to any extent in the civil province of things, his head by much victory grew light (no head can stand more than its

[1] 1869, new par.

quantity); and he lost head, as they say, and became a selfish ambitionist and quack, and was hurled out; leaving his idea to be realised, in the civil province of things, by others! Thus was Napoleon; thus are all great men: children of the idea; or, in Ram-Dass's phraseology, furnished with fire to burn-up the miseries of men. Conscious or unconscious, latent or unfolded, there is small vestige of any such fire being extant in the inner-man of Scott.

Yet on the other hand, the surliest critic must allow that Scott was a genuine man, which itself is a great matter. No affectation, fantasticality or distortion dwelt in him; no shadow of cant. Nay withal, was he not a right brave and strong man, according to his kind? What a load of toil, what a measure of felicity, he quietly bore along with him; with what quiet strength he both worked on this earth, and enjoyed in it; invincible to evil fortune and to good! A most composed invincible man; in difficulty and distress knowing no discouragement, Samson-like carrying off on his strong Samson-shoulders the gates that would imprison him; in danger and menace laughing at the whisper of fear. And then, with such a sunny current of true humour and humanity, a free joyful sympathy with so many things; what of fire he had all lying so beautifully *latent*, as radical latent heat, as fruitful internal warmth of life; a most robust, healthy man! The truth is,

our best definition of Scott were perhaps even this, that he was, if no great man, then something much pleasanter to be, a robust, thoroughly healthy and withal very prosperous and victorious man. An eminently well-conditioned man, healthy in body, healthy in soul; we will call him one of the *healthiest* of men. [1] Neither is this a small matter: health is a great matter, both to the possessor of it and to others. On the whole, that humorist in the Moral Essay was not so far out, who determined on honouring health only; and so instead of humbling himself to the high-born, to the rich and well-dressed, insisted on doffing hat to the healthy: coroneted carriages with pale faces in them passed by as failures, miserable and lamentable; trucks with ruddy-cheeked strength dragging at them were greeted as successful and venerable. For does not health mean harmony, the synonym of all that is true, justly-ordered, good; is it not, in some sense, the net-total, as shown by experiment, of whatever worth is in us? The healthy man is the most meritorious product of Nature so far as he goes. A healthy body is good; but a soul in right health,—it is the thing beyond all others to be prayed for; the blessedest thing this earth receives of Heaven. Without artificial medicament of philosophy, or tight-lacing of creeds (always very questionable), the healthy soul discerns what is good, and adheres to it, and retains

[1] 1869, new par.

it; discerns what is bad, and spontaneously casts it off. An instinct from Nature herself, like that which guides the wild animals of the forest to their food, shows him what he shall do, what he shall abstain from. The false and foreign will not adhere to him; cant and all fantastic diseased incrustations are impossible; —as Walker the *Original*, in such eminence of health was *he* for his part, *could* not, by much abstinence from soap-and-water, attain to a dirty face! This thing thou canst work with and profit by, this thing is substantial and worthy; that other thing thou canst not work with, it is trivial and inapt: so speaks unerringly the inward monition of the man's whole nature. No need of logic to prove the most argumentative absurdity absurd; as Goethe says of himself, 'all this ran down from me like water from 'a man in wax-cloth dress.' Blessed is the healthy nature; it is the coherent, sweetly coöperative, not incoherent, self-distracting,[1] self-destructive one! In the harmonious adjustment and play of all the faculties, the just balance of oneself gives a just feeling towards all men and all things. Glad light from within radiates outwards, and enlightens and embellishes.

Now all this can be predicated of Walter Scott, and of no British literary man that we remember in these days, to any such extent,—if it be not perhaps of one, the most opposite imaginable to Scott, but

[1] Westm. *self-distractive.*

his equal in this quality and what holds of it: William Cobbett! Nay there are other similarities, widely different as they two look; nor be the comparison disparaging to Scott: for Cobbett also, as the pattern John Bull of his century, strong as the rhinoceros, and with singular humanities and genialities shining through his thick skin, is a most brave phenomenon. So bounteous was Nature to us; in the sickliest of recorded ages, when British Literature lay all puking and sprawling in Werterism, Byronism, and other Sentimentalism tearful or spasmodic (fruit of internal *wind*), Nature was kind enough to send us two healthy Men, of whom she might still say, not without pride, "These also were made in England; such limbs do I still make there!" It is one of the cheerfulest sights, let the question of its greatness be settled as you will. A healthy nature may or may not be great; but there is no great nature that is not healthy.

[1] Or, on the whole, might we not say, Scott, in the new vesture of the nineteenth century, was intrinsically very much the old fighting Borderer of prior centuries; the kind of man Nature did of old make in that birthland of his? In the saddle, with the foray-spear, he would have acquitted himself as he did at the desk with his pen. One fancies how, in stout *Beardie* of Harden's time, he could have played Beardie's part; and *been* the stalwart buff-belted

[1] Westm. not new par.

terræ filius he in this late time could only delight to draw. The same stout self-help was in him; the same oak and triple brass round his heart. He too could have fought at Redswire, cracking crowns with the fiercest, if that had been the task; could have harried cattle in Tynedale, repaying injury with compound interest; a right sufficient captain of men. A man without qualms or fantasticalities; a hard-headed, sound-hearted man, of joyous robust temper, looking to the main chance, and fighting direct thitherward; *valde stalwartus homo!*—How much in that case had slumbered in him, and passed away without sign! But indeed who knows how much slumbers in many men? Perhaps our greatest poets are the *mute* Miltons; the vocals [1] are those whom by happy accident we lay hold of, one here, one there, as it chances, and *make* vocal. It is even a question, whether, had not want, discomfort and distress-warrants been busy at Stratford-on-Avon, Shakspeare himself had not lived killing calves or combing wool! Had the Edial Boarding-school turned out well, we had never heard of Samuel Johnson; Samuel Johnson had been a fat schoolmaster and dogmatic gerund-grinder, and never known that he was more. Nature is rich: those two eggs thou art eating carelessly to breakfast, could they not have been hatched into a pair of fowls, and have covered the whole world with poultry?

[1] Westm. *Vocal.*

But it was not harrying of cattle in Tynedale, or cracking of crowns at Redswire, that this stout Borderchief was appointed to perform. Far other work. To be the song-singer and pleasant tale-teller to Britain and Europe, in the beginning of the artificial nineteenth century; here, and not there, lay his business. Beardie of Harden would have found it very amazing. How he shapes himself to this new element; how he helps himself along in it, makes it too do for him, lives sound and victorious in it, and leads over the marches such a spoil as all the cattle-droves the Hardens ever took were poor in comparison to; this is the history of the life and achievements of *our* Sir Walter Scott, Baronet;—whereat we are now to glance for a little! It is a thing remarkable; a thing substantial; of joyful, victorious sort; not unworthy to be glanced at. Withal, however, a glance here and there will suffice. Our limits are narrow; the thing, were it never so victorious, is not of the sublime sort, nor extremely edifying; there is nothing in it to censure vehemently, nor love vehemently; there is more to wonder at than admire; and the whole secret is not an abstruse one.

Till towards the age of thirty, Scott's life has nothing in it decisively pointing towards Literature, or indeed towards distinction of any kind; he is wedded, settled, and has gone through all his pre-

liminary steps, without symptom of renown as yet. It is the life of every other Edinburgh youth of his station and time. Fortunate we must name it, in many ways. Parents in easy or wealthy circumstances, yet unencumbered with the cares and perversions of aristocracy; nothing eminent in place, in faculty or culture, yet nothing deficient; all around is methodic regulation, prudence, prosperity, kind-heartedness; an element of warmth and light, of affection, industry and burgherly comfort, heightened into elegance; in which the young heart can wholesomely grow. A vigorous health seems to have been given by Nature; yet, as if Nature had said withal, "Let it be a health to express itself by mind, not by body," a lameness is added in childhood; the brave little boy, instead of romping and bickering, must learn to think; or at lowest, what is a great matter, to sit still. No rackets and trundling-hoops for this young Walter; but ballads, history-books and a world of legendary stuff, which his mother and those near him are copiously able to furnish. Disease, which is but superficial, and issues in outward lameness, does not cloud the young existence; rather forwards it towards the expansion it is fitted for. The miserable disease had been one of the internal nobler parts, marring the general organisation; under which no Walter Scott could have been forwarded, or with all his other endowments could have been producible or possible.

'Nature gives healthy children much; how much! 'Wise education is a wise unfolding of this; often 'it unfolds itself better of its own accord.'

Add one other circumstance: the place where; namely, Presbyterian Scotland. The influences of this are felt incessantly, they stream-in at every pore. 'There is a country accent,' says La Rochefoucault, 'not in speech only, but in thought, conduct, character 'and manner of existing, which never forsakes a man.' Scott, we believe, was all his days an Episcopalian Dissenter in Scotland; but that makes little to the matter. Nobody who knows Scotland and Scott can doubt but Presbyterianism too had a vast share in the forming of him. A country where the entire people is, or even once has been, laid hold of, filled to the heart with an infinite religious idea, has 'made 'a step from which it cannot retrograde.' Thought, conscience, the sense that man is denizen of a Universe, creature of an Eternity, has penetrated to the remotest cottage, to the simplest heart. Beautiful and awful, the feeling of a Heavenly Behest, of Duty god-commanded, over-canopies all life. There is an inspiration in such a people: one may say in a more special sense, 'the inspiration of the Almighty giveth 'them understanding.' Honour to all the brave and true; everlasting honour to brave old Knox, one of the truest of the true! That, in the moment while he and his cause, amid civil broils, in convulsion and

confusion, were still but struggling for life, he sent the schoolmaster forth to all corners, and said, "Let the people be taught:" this is but one, and indeed an inevitable and comparatively inconsiderable item in his great message to men. His message, in its true compass, was, "Let men know that they are men; created by God, responsible to God; who work in any meanest moment of time what will last through eternity." It is verily a great message. Not ploughing and hammering machines, not patent-digesters (never so ornamental) to digest the produce of these: no, in no wise; born slaves neither of their fellow-men, nor of their own appetites; but men! This great message Knox did deliver, with a man's voice and strength; and found a people to believe him.

Of such an achievement, we say, were it to be made once only, the results are immense. Thought, in such a country, may change its form, but cannot go out; the country has attained *majority;* thought, and a certain spiritual manhood, ready for all work that man can do, endures there. It may take many forms: the form of hard-fisted money-getting industry, as in the vulgar Scotchman, in the vulgar New Englander; but as compact developed force and alertness of faculty, it is still there; it may utter itself one day as the colossal Scepticism of a Hume (beneficent this too though painful, wrestling Titan-like through doubt and inquiry towards new belief); and again,

some better day, it may utter itself as the inspired Melody of a Burns: in a word, it is there,[1] and continues to manifest itself,[1] in the Voice and the Work of a Nation of hardy endeavouring considering men, with whatever that may bear in it, or unfold from it. The Scotch national character originates in many circumstances; first of all, in the Saxon stuff there was to work on; but next, and beyond all else except that, in the Presbyterian Gospel of John Knox. It seems a good national character; and on some sides not so good. Let Scott thank John Knox, for he owed him much, little as he dreamed of debt in that quarter! No Scotchman of his time was more entirely Scotch than Walter Scott: the good and the not so good, which all Scotchmen inherit, ran through every fibre of him.

Scott's childhood, school-days, college-days, are pleasant to read of, though they differ not from those of others in his place and time. The memory of him may probably enough last till this record of them become far more curious than it now is. "So lived an Edinburgh Writer to the Signet's son in the end of the eighteenth century," may some future Scotch novelist say to himself in the end of the twenty-first! The following little fragment of infancy is all we can extract. It is from an Autobiography which he had begun, which one cannot but regret he did not finish. Scott's best qualities never shone out more freely

[1] Westm. omits *there* and *to manifest itself*.

than when he went upon anecdote and reminiscence. Such a master of narrative and of himself could have done personal narrative well. Here, if anywhère, his knowledge was complete, and all his humour and good-humour had free scope :

'An odd incident is worth recording. It seems, my mother had sent a maid to take charge of me, at this farm of Sandy-Knowe, that I might be no inconvenience to the family. But the damsel sent on that important mission had left her heart behind her, in the keeping of some wild fellow, it is likely, who had done and said more to her than he was like to make good. She became extremely desirous to return to Edinburgh ; and, as my mother made a point of her remaining where she was, she contracted a sort of hatred at poor me, as the cause of her being detained at Sandy-Knowe. This rose, I suppose, to a sort of delirious affection ; for she confessed to old Alison Wilson, the housekeeper, that she had carried me up to the craigs under a strong temptation of the Devil to cut my throat with her scissors, and bury me in the moss. Alison instantly took possession of my person, and took care that her confidant should not be subject to any farther temptation, at least so far as I was concerned. She was dismissed of course, and I have heard afterwards became a lunatic.

'It is here, at Sandy-Knowe, in the residence of my paternal grandfather, already mentioned, that I have the first consciousness of existence ; and I recollect distinctly that my situation and appearance were a little whimsical. Among the odd remedies recurred to, to aid my lameness, some one had recommended that so often as a sheep was killed for the use of the family, I should be stripped, and swathed-up in the skin warm as it was flayed from the carcass of the animal. In this Tartar-like habiliment I well remember lying upon the floor of the little parlour in the farmhouse, while my grandfather, a venerable old man with white hair, used every excitement to make me try to crawl. I also distinctly remember the late Sir George M'Dougal of Mackerstown, father of the present Sir Henry Hay M'Dougal, joining in the

attempt. He was, God knows how, a relation of ours; and I still recollect him, in his old-fashioned military habit (he had been Colonel of the Greys), with a small cocked-hat deeply laced, an embroidered scarlet waistcoat, and a light-coloured coat, with milk-white locks tied in a military fashion, kneeling on the ground before me, and dragging his watch along the carpet to induce me to follow it. The benevolent old soldier, and the infant wrapped in his sheepskin, would have afforded an odd group to uninterested spectators. This must have happened about my third year (1774), for Sir George M'Dougal and my grandfather both died shortly after that period.'

We will glance next into the '*Liddesdale Raids*.' Scott has grown-up to be a brisk-hearted jovial young man and Advocate: in vacation-time he makes excursions to the Highlands, to the Border Cheviots and Northumberland; rides free and far, on his stout galloway, through bog and brake, over the dim moory Debatable Land,—over Flodden and other fields and places, where, though he yet knew it not, his work lay. No land, however dim and moory, but either has had or will have its poet, and so become not unknown in song. Liddesdale, which was once as prosaic as most dales, having now attained illustration, let us glance thitherward: Liddesdale too is on this ancient Earth of ours, under this eternal Sky; and gives and takes, in the most incalculable manner, with the Universe at large! Scott's experiences there are rather of the rustic Arcadian sort; the element of whisky not wanting. We should premise that here and there a feature has, perhaps, been aggravated for effect's sake:

'During seven successive years,' writes Mr. Lockhart (for the Autobiography has long since left us), 'Scott made a *raid*, as he called it, into Liddesdale with Mr. Shortreed, sheriff-substitute of Roxburgh, for his guide; exploring every rivulet to its source, and every ruined *peel* from foundation to battlement. At this time no wheeled carriage had ever been seen in the district;—the first, indeed, was a gig, driven by Scott himself for a part of his way, when on the last of these seven excursions. There was no inn nor publichouse of any kind in the whole valley; the travellers passed from the shepherd's hut to the minister's manse, and again from the cheerful hospitality of the manse to the rough and jolly welcome of the homestead; gathering, wherever they went, songs and tunes, and occasionally more tangible relics of antiquity, —even such a "rowth of auld knicknackets" as Burns ascribes to Captain Grose. To these rambles Scott owed much of the materials of his *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border;* and not less of that intimate acquaintance with the living manners of these unsophisticated regions, which constitutes the chief charm of one of the most charming of his prose works. But how soon he had any definite object before him in his researches seems very doubtful. "He was *makin' himsell* a' the time," said Mr. Shortreed; "but he didna ken maybe what he was about till years had passed: at first he thought o' little, I daresay, but the queerness and the fun."

'"In those days," says the Memorandum before me, "advocates were not so plenty—at least about Liddesdale;" and the worthy Sheriff-substitute goes on to describe the sort of bustle, not unmixed with alarm, produced at the first farmhouse they visited (Willie Elliot's at Millburnholm), when the honest man was informed of the quality of one of his guests. When they dismounted, accordingly, he received Mr. Scott with great ceremony, and insisted upon himself leading his horse to the stable. Shortreed accompanied Willie, however; and the latter, after taking a deliberate peep at Scott, "out-by the edge of the door-cheek," whispered, "Weel, Robin, I say,[1] de'il hae me if I's be a bit feared for him now; he's just a chield like ourselves, I

[1] Westm. omits *I say*.

think." Half-a-dozen dogs of all degrees had already gathered round "the advocate," and his way of returning their compliments had set Willie Elliot at once at his ease.

'According to Mr. Shortreed, this good man of Millburnholm was the great original of Dandie Dinmont.' * * * 'They dined at Millburnholm; and, after having lingered over Willie Elliot's punch-bowl, until, in Mr. Shortreed's phrase, they were "half-glowrin'," mounted their steeds again, and proceeded to Dr. Elliot's at Cleughhead, where ("for," says my Memorandum, "folk werena very nice in those days") the two travellers [1] slept in one and the same bed,—as, indeed, seems to have been the case with them throughout most of their excursions in this primitive district. Dr. Elliot (a clergyman) had already a large MS. collection of the ballads Scott was in quest of.' * * * 'Next morning they seem to have ridden a long way for the express purpose of visiting one "auld Thomas o' Tuzzilehope," another Elliot, I suppose, who was celebrated for his skill on the Border pipe, and in particular for being in possession of the real *lilt* of *Dick o' the Cowe*. Before starting, that is, at six o'clock, the ballad-hunters had, "just to lay the stomach, a devilled duck or twae and some *London* porter." Auld Thomas found them, nevertheless, well disposed for "breakfast" on their arrival at Tuzzilehope; and this being over, he delighted them with one of the most hideous and unearthly of all specimens of "riding music," and, moreover, with considerable libations of whisky-punch, manufactured in a certain wooden vessel, resembling a very small milkpail, which he called "Wisdom," because it "made" only a few spoonfuls of spirits,[2]—though he had the art of replenishing it so adroitly, that it had been celebrated for fifty years as more fatal to sobriety than any bowl in the parish. Having done due honour to "Wisdom," they again mounted, and proceeded over moss and moor to some other equally hospitable master of the pipe. "Ah me," says Shortreed, "sic an endless fund o' humour and drollery as he then had wi' him! Never ten yards but we were either laughing or roaring and singing. Wherever we stopped, how brawlie he suited

[1] Westm. *the two travellers* after *where*. [2] Westm. *liquor*.

himsell to everybody! He aye did as the lave [1] did; never made himsell the great man, or took ony airs in the [2] company. I've seen him in a' moods in these jaunts, grave and gay, daft and serious, sober and drunk—(this, however, even in our wildest rambles, was rare)—but, drunk or sober, he was aye the gentleman. He lookit excessively heavy and stupid when he was *fou*, but he was never out o' gude humour." '

These are questionable doings, questionably narrated; but what shall we say of the following, wherein the element of whisky plays an extremely prominent part? We will say that it *is* questionable, and not exemplary, whisky mounting clearly beyond its level; that indeed charity hopes and conjectures here may be some aggravating of features for effect's sake!

'On reaching, one evening, some *Charlieshope* or other (I forget the name) among those wildernesses, they found a kindly reception, as usual; but, to their agreeable surprise after some days of hard living, a measured and orderly hospitality as respected liquor. Soon after supper, at which a bottle of elderberry-wine alone had been produced, a young student of divinity, who happened to be in the house, was called upon to take the "big ha' Bible," in the good old fashion of "Burns's Saturday Night;" and some progress had been already made in the service, when the good-man of the farm, whose "tendency," as Mr. Mitchell says, "was soporific," scandalised his wife and the dominie by starting suddenly from his knees, and, rubbing his eyes, with a stentorian exclamation of "By ——, here's the keg at last!" and in tumbled, as he spoke the word, a couple of sturdy herdsmen, whom, on hearing a day before of the advocate's approaching visit, he had despatched to a certain smuggler's haunt, at some considerable distance, in quest of a supply of *run* brandy from the Solway Frith. The pious

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[1] Westm. *rest.* [2] Westm. omits *the.*

"exercise" of the household was hopelessly interrupted. With a thousand apologies for his hitherto shabby entertainment, this jolly Elliot, or Armstrong, had the welcome *keg* mounted on the table without a moment's delay; and gentle and simple, not forgetting the dominie, continued carousing about it until daylight streamed-in upon the party. Sir Walter Scott seldom failed, when I saw him in company with his Liddesdale companion, to mimic with infinite humour the sudden outburst of his old host on hearing the clatter of horses' feet, which he knew to indicate the arrival of the keg—the consternation of the dame—and the rueful despair with which the young clergyman closed the book.'

From which Liddesdale *raids*, which we here, like the young clergyman, close not without a certain rueful despair, let the reader draw what nourishment he can. They evince satisfactorily, though in a rude manner, that in those days young advocates, and Scott like the rest of them, were *alive* and alert,—whisky sometimes preponderating. But let us now fancy that the jovial young Advocate has pleaded his first cause; has served in yeomanry drills; been wedded, been promoted Sheriff, without romance in either case; dabbling a little the while, under guidance of Monk Lewis, in translations from the German, in translation of Goethe's *Götz with the Iron Hand*; —and we have arrived at the threshold of the *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, and the opening of a new century.

Hitherto, therefore, there has been made out, by Nature and Circumstance working together, nothing unusually remarkable, yet still something very valuable;

a stout effectual man of thirty, full of broad sagacity and good humour, with faculties in him fit for any burden of business, hospitality and duty, legal or civic :—with what other faculties in him no one could yet say. As indeed, who, after lifelong inspection, can say what is in any man? The uttered part of a man's life, let us always repeat, bears to the unuttered unconscious part a small unknown proportion; he himself never knows it, much less do others. Give him room, give him *impulse;* he reaches down to the Infinite with that so straitly-imprisoned soul of his; and *can* do miracles if need be! It is one of the comfortablest truths that great men abound, though in the unknown state. Nay, as above hinted, our greatest, being also by nature our *quietest*, are perhaps those that remain unknown! Philosopher Fichte took comfort in this belief, when from all pulpits and editorial desks, and publications periodical and stationary, he could hear nothing but the infinite chattering and twittering of commonplace become ambitious; and in the infinite stir of motion nowhither, and of din which should have been silence, all seemed churned into one tempestuous yesty froth, and the stern Fichte almost desired 'taxes on knowledge' to allay it a little;—he comforted himself, we say, by the unshaken belief that Thought did still exist in Germany; that thinking men, each in his own corner, were verily doing their work, though in a silent latent manner.

[1] Walter Scott, as a latent Walter, had never amused all men for a score of years in the course of centuries and eternities, or gained and lost several [2] hundred thousand pounds sterling by Literature; but he might have been a happy and by no means a useless,—nay, who knows at bottom whether not a still usefuler Walter! However, that was not his fortune. The Genius of rather a [3] singular age,—an age at once destitute of faith and terrified at scepticism, with little knowledge of its whereabout, with many sorrows to bear or front, and on the whole with a life to lead in these new circumstances,—had said to himself: What man shall be the temporary comforter, or were it but the spiritual comfit-maker, of this my poor singular age, to solace its dead tedium and manifold sorrows a little? So had the Genius said, looking over all the world, What man? and found him walking the dusty Outer Parliament-house of Edinburgh, with his advocate-gown on his back; and exclaimed, That is he!

The *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* proved to be a well from which flowed one of the broadest rivers. Metrical Romances (which in due time pass into Prose Romances); the old life of men resuscitated for us: it is a mighty word! Not as dead tradition, but as a palpable presence, the past stood before us. There they were, the rugged old fighting men; in their

[1] 1869, new par. [2] Westm. *say a.* [3] Westm. *a rather.*

doughty simplicity and strength, with their heartiness, their healthiness, their stout self-help, in their iron basnets, leather jerkins, jack-boots, in their quaintness of manner and costume; there as they looked and lived: it was like a new-discovered continent in Literature; for the new century, a bright El Dorado,—or else some fat beatific land of Cockaigne, and Paradise of Donothings. To the opening nineteenth century, in its languor and paralysis, nothing could have been welcomer. Most unexpected, most refreshing and exhilarating; behold our new El Dorado; our fat beatific Lubberland, where one can enjoy and do nothing! It was the time for such a new Literature; and this Walter Scott was the man for it. The *Lays*, the *Marmions*, the *Ladys* and *Lords* of Lake and Isles, followed in quick [1] succession, with ever-widening profit and praise. How many thousands of guineas were paid-down for each new Lay; how many thousands of copies (fifty and more sometimes) were printed off, then and subsequently; what complimenting, reviewing, renown and apotheosis there was: all is recorded in these Seven Volumes, which will be valuable in literary statistics. It is a history, brilliant, remarkable; the outlines of which are known to all. The reader shall recall it, or conceive it. No blaze in his fancy is likely to mount higher than the reality did.

[1] Westm. *thick*.

At this middle period of his life, therefore, Scott, enriched with copyrights, with new official incomes and promotions, rich in money, rich in repute, presents himself as a man in the full career of success. 'Health, wealth, and wit to guide them' (as his vernacular Proverb says), all these three are his. The field is open for him, and victory there; his own faculty, his own self, unshackled, victoriously unfolds itself,—the highest blessedness that can befall a man. Wide circle of friends, personal loving admirers; warmth of domestic joys, vouchsafed to all that can true-heartedly nestle down among them; light of radiance and renown given only to a few: who would not call Scott happy? But the happiest circumstance of all is, as we said above, that Scott had in himself a right healthy soul, rendering him little dependent on outward circumstances. Things showed themselves to him not in distortion or borrowed light or gloom, but as they were. Endeavour lay in him and endurance, in due measure; and clear vision of what was to be endeavoured after. Were one to preach a Sermon on Health, as really were worth doing, Scott ought to be the text. Theories are demonstrably true in the way of logic; and then in the way of practice they prove true or else not true: but here is the grand experiment, Do they turn-out well? What boots it that a man's creed is the wisest, that his system of principles is the superfinest, if, when set

to work, the life of him does nothing but jar, and fret itself into *holes?* They are untrue in that, were it in nothing else, these principles of his; openly convicted of untruth;—fit only, shall we say, to be rejected as counterfeits, and flung to the dogs? We say not that; but we do say, that ill-health, of body or of mind, is *defeat*, is battle (in a good or in a bad cause) with bad success; that health alone is victory. Let all men, if they can manage it, contrive to be healthy! He who in what cause soever sinks into pain and disease, let him take thought of it; let him know well that it is not good *he* has arrived at yet, but surely evil,—may, or may not be, on the way towards good.

Scott's healthiness showed itself decisively in all things, and nowhere more decisively than in this: the way in which he took his fame; the estimate he from the first formed of fame. Money will buy money's worth; but the thing men call fame, what is it? A gaudy emblazonry, not good for much,—except, indeed, as it too may turn to money. To Scott it was a profitable pleasing superfluity, no necessary of life. Not necessary, now or ever! Seemingly without much effort, but taught by Nature, and the instinct which instructs the sound heart what is good for it and what is not, he felt that he could always do without this same emblazonry of reputation; that he ought to put no trust in it; but be ready at any time to see it pass away from him, and to hold on his way

as before. It is incalculable, as we conjecture, what evil he escaped in this manner; what perversions, irritations, mean agonies without a name, he lived wholly apart from, knew nothing of. Happily before fame arrived, he had reached the mature age at which all this was easier to him. What a strange Nemesis lurks in the felicities of men! In thy mouth it shall be sweet as honey, in thy belly it shall be bitter as gall! Some weakly-organised individual, we will say at the age of five-and-twenty, whose main or whole talent rests on some prurient susceptivity, and nothing under it but shallowness and vacuum, is clutched hold of by the general imagination, is whirled aloft to the giddy height; and taught to believe the divine-seeming message that he is a great man: such individual seems the luckiest of men: and, alas, is [1] he not the unluckiest? Swallow not the Circe-draught, O weakly-organised individual; it is fell poison; it will dry up the fountains of thy whole existence, and all will grow withered and parched; thou shalt be wretched under the sun! [2] Is there, for example, a sadder book than that *Life of Byron* by Moore? To omit mere prurient susceptivities that rest on vacuum, look at poor Byron, who really had much substance in him. Sitting there in his self-exile, with a proud heart striving to persuade itself that it despises the entire created Universe; and far off, in foggy Babylon, let any pitifulest whipster

[1] Westm. *is* (italics). [2] 1869, new par.

draw pen on him, your proud Byron writhes in torture, —as if the pitiful whipster were a magician, or his pen a galvanic wire struck [1] into the Byron's spinal marrow! Lamentable, despicable,—one had rather be a kitten and cry mew! O son of Adam, great or little, according as thou art lovable, those thou livest with will love thee. Those thou livest *not* with, is it of moment that they have the alphabetic letters of thy name engraved on their memory, with some signpost likeness of thee (as like as I to Hercules) appended to them? It is not of moment; in sober truth, not of any moment at all! And yet, behold, there is no soul now whom thou canst love freely,—from *one* soul only art thou always sure of reverence enough; in presence of no soul is it rightly well with thee! How is thy world become desert; and thou, for the sake of a little babblement of tongues, art poor, bankrupt, insolvent not in purse, but in heart and mind! 'The Golden Calf of self-love,' says Jean Paul, 'has grown into a burning Phalaris' Bull, to consume its owner and worshipper.' Ambition, the desire of shining and outshining, was the beginning of Sin in this world. The man of letters who founds upon his fame, does he not thereby alone declare himself a follower of Lucifer (named *Satan*, the Enemy), and member of the Satanic school?——

It was in this poetic period that Scott formed his

[1] Westm. *stuck*.

connexion with the Ballantynes; and embarked, though under cover, largely in trade. To those who regard him in the heroic light, and will have *Vates* to signify Prophet as well as Poet, this portion of his biography seems somewhat incongruous.[1] Viewed as it stood in the reality, as he was and as it was, the enterprise, since it proved so unfortunate, may be called lamentable, but cannot be called unnatural. The practical Scott, looking towards practical issues in all things, could not but find hard cash one of the most practical. If by any means cash could be honestly produced, were it by writing poems, were it by printing them, why not? Great things might be done ultimately; great difficulties were at once got rid of,—manifold higglings [2] of booksellers, and contradictions [3] of sinners hereby fell away. A printing and bookselling speculation was not so alien for a maker of books. Voltaire, who indeed got no copyrights, made much money by the war-commissariat, in his time; we believe, by the victualling branch of it. St. George himself, they say, was a dealer in bacon in Cappadocia. A thrifty man will help himself towards his object by such steps as lead to it. Station in society, solid power over the good things of this world, was Scott's avowed object; towards which the precept of precepts is that of Iago, *Put money in thy purse.*

[1] Westm. *incoherent.* [2] Westm. *higgling.*
[3] Westm. *contradiction.*

Here, indeed, it is to be remarked, that perhaps no literary man of any generation has less value than Scott for the immaterial part of his mission in any sense: not only for the fantasy called fame, with the fantastic miseries attendant thereon; but also for the spiritual purport of his work, whether it tended hitherward or thitherward, or had any tendency whatever; and indeed for all purports and results of his working, except such, we may say, as offered themselves to the eye, and could, in one sense or the other, be handled, looked at and buttoned into the breeches-pocket. Somewhat too little of a fantast, this *Vates* of ours! But so it was: in this nineteenth century, our highest literary man, who immeasurably beyond all others commanded the world's ear, had, as it were, no message whatever to deliver to the world; wished not the world to elevate itself, to amend itself, to do this or to do that, except simply pay him for the books he kept writing. Very remarkable; fittest, perhaps, for an age fallen languid, destitute of faith and terrified at scepticism? Or, perhaps, for quite another sort of age, an age all in peaceable triumphant motion? Be this as it may,[1] surely since Shakspeare's time there has been no great speaker so unconscious of an aim in speaking as Walter Scott.[2] Equally unconscious these two utterances; equally the sincere

[1] Westm. *But, indeed,* instead of *Be this as it may.*

[2] Westm. omits *as Walter Scott.*

complete products of the minds they came from: and now if they were equally *deep?* Or, if the one was living fire, and the other was futile phosphorescence and mere resinous firework? It will depend on the relative worth of the minds; for both were equally spontaneous, both equally expressed themselves unencumbered by an ulterior aim. Beyond drawing audiences to the Globe Theatre, Shakspeare contemplated no result in those plays of his. Yet they have had results! Utter with free heart what thy own *dæmon* gives thee: if fire from heaven, it shall be well; if resinous firework, it shall be—as well as it [1] could be, or better than otherwise! [2] The candid judge will, in general, require that a speaker, in so extremely serious a Universe as this of ours, have something to speak about. In the heart of the speaker there ought to be some kind of gospel-tidings, burning till it be uttered; otherwise it were better for him that he altogether held his peace. A gospel somewhat more decisive than this of Scott's,—except to an age altogether languid, without either scepticism or faith! These things the candid judge will demand of literary men; yet withal will recognise the great worth there is in Scott's honesty if in nothing more, in his being the thing he was with such entire good faith. Here is a something, not a nothing. If no skyborn messenger, heaven looking through his eyes; then neither is it

[1] Westm. *it* (italics). [2] 1869, new par.

a chimera with his [1] systems, crotchets, cants, fanaticisms, and 'last infirmity of noble minds,'—full of misery, unrest and ill-will; but a substantial, peaceable, terrestrial man. Far as the Earth is under the Heaven does Scott stand below the former sort of character; but high as the cheerful flowery Earth is above waste Tartarus does he stand above the latter. Let him live in his own fashion, and do honour to him in that.

It were late in the day to write criticisms on those Metrical Romances: at the same time, we may remark,[2] the great popularity they had seems natural enough. In the first place, there was the indisputable impress of worth, of genuine human force, in them. This, which lies in some degree, or is thought to lie, at the bottom of all popularity, did to an unusual degree disclose itself in these rhymed romances of Scott's. Pictures were actually painted and presented; human emotions conceived and sympathised with. Considering what wretched Della-Cruscan and other vamping-up of old worn-out tatters was the staple article then, it may be granted that Scott's excellence was superior and supreme. When a Hayley was the main singer, a Scott might well be hailed with warm welcome. Consider whether the *Loves of the Plants*, and even the *Loves of the Triangles*, could be worth the loves and hates of men and women! Scott was as preferable to what he displaced, as the substance is

[1] Westm. *its.* [2] Westm. omits *we may remark.*

to [1] wearisomely repeated shadow of a substance. [2] But, in the second place, we may say that the *kind* of worth which Scott manifested was fitted especially for the then temper of men. We have called it an age fallen into spiritual languor, destitute of belief, yet terrified at Scepticism; reduced to live a stinted half-life, under strange new circumstances. Now vigorous whole-life, this was what of all things these delineations offered. The reader was carried back to rough strong times, wherein those maladies of ours had not yet arisen. Brawny fighters, all cased in buff and iron, their hearts too sheathed in oak and triple brass, caprioled their huge war-horses, shook their death-doing spears; and went forth in the most determined manner, nothing doubting. The reader sighed, yet not without a reflex solacement: "O, that I too had lived in those times, had never known these logic-cobwebs, this doubt, this sickliness; and been and felt myself alive among men alive!" Add lastly, that in this new-found poetic world there was no call for effort on the reader's part; what excellence they had, exhibited itself at a glance. It was for the reader, not the [3] El Dorado only, but a beatific land of Cockaigne and Paradise of Donothings! The reader, what the vast majority of readers so long to do, was allowed to lie down at his ease, and be ministered to. What the Turkish bathkeeper is said to aim at with his frictions,

[1] Westm. inserts *the*. [2] 1869, new par. [3] Westm. *an*.

and shampooings, and fomentings, more or less effectually, that the patient in total idleness may have the delights of activity,—was here to a considerable extent realised. The languid imagination fell back into its rest; an artist was there who could supply it with high-painted scenes, with sequences of stirring action, and whisper to it, Be at ease, and let thy tepid element be comfortable to thee. 'The rude man,' says a critic, 'requires only to see something going on. 'The man of more refinement must be made to feel. 'The man of complete refinement must be made to 'reflect.'

We named the *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* the fountain from which flowed this great river of Metrical Romances; but according to some they can be traced to a still higher, obscurer spring; to Goethe's *Götz von Berlichingen with the Iron Hand;* of which, as we have seen, Scott in his earlier days executed a translation. Dated a good many years ago, the following words in a criticism on Goethe are found written; which probably are still new to most readers of this Review:

'The works just mentioned, *Götz* and *Werter*, though noble specimens of youthful talent, are still not so much distinguished by their intrinsic merits as by their splendid fortune. It would be difficult to name two books which have exercised a deeper influence on the subsequent literature of Europe than these two performances of a young author; his first-fruits, the produce of his twenty-fourth year. *Werter* appeared to seize the hearts of men in all quarters of the world, and to utter for them the word which they had long been

waiting to hear. As usually happens too, this same word, once uttered, was soon abundantly repeated; spoken in all dialects, and chanted through all notes of the gamut, till the sound of it had grown a weariness rather than a pleasure. Sceptical sentimentality, view-hunting, love, friendship, suicide and desperation, became the staple of literary ware; and though the epidemic, after a long course of years, subsided in Germany, it reappeared with various modifications in other countries, and everywhere abundant traces of its good and bad effects are still to be discerned. The fortune of *Berlichingen with the Iron Hand*, though less sudden, was by no means less exalted. In his own country, *Götz*, though he now stands solitary and childless, became the parent of an innumerable progeny of chivalry plays, feudal delineations, and poetico-antiquarian performances; which, though long ago deceased, made noise enough in their day and generation: and with ourselves his influence has been perhaps still more remarkable. Sir Walter Scott's first literary enterprise was a translation of *Götz von Berlichingen:* and, if genius could be communicated like instruction, we might call this work of Goethe's the prime cause of *Marmion* and the *Lady of the Lake*, with all that has followed from the same creative hand. Truly, a grain of seed that has lighted in the right soil! For if not firmer and fairer, it has grown to be taller and broader than any other tree; and all the nations of the earth are still yearly gathering of its fruit.'

How far *Götz von Berlichingen* actually affected Scott's literary destination, and whether without it the rhymed romances, and then the prose romances of the Author of Waverley, would not have followed as they did, must remain a very obscure question; obscure, and not important. Of the fact, however, there is no doubt, that[1] these two tendencies, which may be named *Götzism* and *Werterism*, of the former of which

[1] Westm. *but.*

Scott was representative with us, have made, and are still in some quarters making the tour of all Europe. In Germany too there was this affectionate half-regretful looking-back into the Past; Germany had its buff-belted watch-tower period in literature, and had even got done with it before Scott began. Then as to *Werterism*, had not we English our Byron and his genus? No form of Werterism in any other country had half the potency; as our Scott carried Chivalry Literature to the ends of the world, so did our Byron Werterism. France, busy with its Revolution and [1] Napoleon, had little leisure at the moment for Götzism or Werterism; but it has had them both since, in a shape of its own: witness the whole 'Literature of Desperation' in our own days; the beggarliest form of Werterism yet seen, probably its expiring final form: witness also, at the other extremity of the scale, a noble-gifted Chateaubriand, Götz and Werter both in one.—Curious: how all Europe is but like a set of parishes of the same county; participant of the self-same influences, ever since the Crusades, and earlier; —and these glorious wars of ours are but like parish-brawls, which begin in mutual ignorance, intoxication and boastful speech; which end in broken windows, damage, waste and bloody noses; and which one hopes the general good sense is now in the way towards putting down, in some measure!

[1] Westm. inserts *its*.

But [1] leaving this to be as it can, what it concerned us here to remark, was that British Werterism, in the shape of those Byron Poems, so potent and poignant, produced on the languid appetite of men a mighty effect. This too was a 'class of feelings deeply im-'portant to modern minds; feelings which arise from '*passion incapable of being converted into action*, which 'belong to an age as indolent, cultivated and unbeliev-'ing as our own!' The 'languid age without either 'faith or scepticism' turned towards Byronism with an interest altogether peculiar: here, if no cure for its miserable paralysis and languor, was at least an indignant statement of the misery; an indignant Ernulphus' curse read over it,—which all men felt to be something. Half-regretful lookings into the Past gave place, in many quarters, to Ernulphus' cursings of the Present. Scott was among the first to perceive that the day of Metrical Chivalry Romances was declining. He had held the sovereignty for some half-score of years, a comparatively long lease of it; and now the time seemed come for dethronement, for abdication: an unpleasant business; which however he held himself ready, as a brave man will, to transact with composure and in silence. After all, Poetry was not his staff of life; Poetry had already yielded him much money; *this* at least it would not take back from him. Busy always with editing, with compiling, with

[1] Westm. inserts *however*.

multiplex official commercial business, and solid interests, he beheld the coming change with unmoved eye.

Resignation he was prepared to exhibit in this matter;—and now behold there proved to be no need of resignation. Let the Metrical Romance become a Prose one; shake off its rhyme-fetters, and try a wider sweep! In the spring of 1814 appeared *Waverley;* an event memorable in the annals of British Literature; in the annals of British Bookselling thrice and four times memorable. Byron sang, but Scott narrated; and when the song had sung itself out through all variations onwards to the *Don Juan* one, Scott was still found narrating, and carrying the whole world along with him. All bygone popularity of chivalry-lays was swallowed up in a far greater. What 'series' followed out of *Waverley*, and how and with what result, is known to all men; was witnessed and watched with a kind of rapt astonishment by all. Hardly any literary reputation ever rose so high in our Island; no reputation at all ever spread so wide. Walter Scott became Sir Walter Scott, Baronet, of Abbotsford; on whom Fortune seemed to pour her whole cornucopia of wealth, honour and worldly good; the favourite of Princes and of Peasants, and all intermediate men. His 'Waverley series,' swift-following one on the other apparently without end, was the universal reading; looked for like an annual harvest,

by all ranks, in all European countries. [1] A curious circumstance superadded itself, that the author though known was unknown. From the first most people suspected, and soon after the first, few intelligent persons much doubted, that the Author of *Waverley* was Walter Scott. Yet a certain mystery was still kept up; rather piquant to the public; doubtless very pleasant to the author, who saw it all; who probably had not to listen, as other hapless individuals often had, to this or the other long-drawn 'clear proof at last,' that the author was not Walter Scott, but a certain astonishing Mr. So-and-so; —one of the standing miseries of human life in that time. But for the privileged Author it was like a king travelling incognito. All men know that he is a high king, chivalrous Gustaf or Kaiser Joseph; but he mingles in their meetings without cumber of etiquette or lonesome ceremony, as Chevalier du Nord, or Count of Lorraine: he has none of the weariness of royality, and yet all the praise, and the satisfaction of hearing it with his own ears. In a word, the Waverley Novels circulated and reigned triumphant; to the general imagination the 'Author of *Waverley*' was like some living mythological personage, and ranked among the chief wonders of the world.

How a man lived and demeaned himself in such unwonted circumstances, is worth seeing. We would

[1] 1869, new par.

gladly quote from Scott's correspondence of this period; but that does not much illustrate the matter. His letters, as above stated, are never without interest, yet also seldom or never very interesting. They are full of cheerfulness, of wit and ingenuity; but they do not treat of aught intimate; without impeaching their sincerity, what is called sincerity, one may say they do not, in any case whatever, proceed from the innermost parts of the mind. Conventional forms, due consideration of your own and your correspondent's pretensions and vanities, are at no moment left out of view. The epistolary stream runs on, lucid, free, glad-flowing; but always, as it were, *parallel* to the real substance of the matter, never coincident with it. One feels it hollowish under foot. Letters they are of a most humane man of the world, even exemplary in that kind; but with the man of the world always visible in them;—as indeed it was little in Scott's way to speak, perhaps even with himself, in any other fashion. We select rather some glimpses of him from Mr. Lockhart's record. The first is of dining with Royalty or Prince-Regentship itself; an almost official matter:

'On hearing from Mr. Croker (then Secretary to the Admiralty) that Scott was to be in town by the middle of March (1815), the Prince said, "Let me know when he comes, and I'll get-up a snug little dinner that will suit him;" and, after he had been presented and graciously received at the *levee*, he was invited to dinner accordingly, through his excellent friend Mr. Adam (now Lord Chief Commissioner

of the Jury Court in Scotland), who at that time held a confidential office in the royal household. The Regent had consulted with Mr. Adam, also, as to the composition of the party. "Let us have," said he, "just a few friends of his own, and the more Scotch the better;" and both the Commissioner and Mr. Croker assure me that the party was the most interesting and agreeable one in their recollection. It comprised, I believe, the Duke of York—the Duke of Gordon (then Marquess of Huntly)—the Marquess of Hertford (then Lord Yarmouth)—the Earl of Fife—and Scott's early friend, Lord Melville. "The Prince and Scott," says Mr. Croker, "were the two most brilliant story-tellers, in their several ways, that I have ever happened to meet; they were both aware of their *forte*, and both exerted themselves that evening with delightful effect. On going home, I really could not decide which of them had shone the most.[1] The Regent was enchanted with Scott, as Scott with him; and on all his [2] subsequent visits to London, he was a frequent guest at the royal table." The Lord Chief Commissioner remembers that the Prince was particularly delighted with the poet's anecdotes of the old Scotch judges and lawyers, which his Royal Highness sometimes *capped* by ludicrous traits of certain ermined [3] sages of his own acquaintance. Scott told, among others, a story, which he was fond of telling, of his old friend the Lord Justice-Clerk Braxfield; and the commentary of his Royal Highness on hearing it amused Scott, who often mentioned it afterwards. The anecdote is this: Braxfield, whenever he went on a particular circuit, was in the habit of visiting a gentleman of good fortune in the neighbourhood of one of the assize towns, and staying at least one night, which, being both of them ardent chess-players, they usually concluded with their favourite game. One Spring circuit the battle was not decided at daybreak; so the Justice-Clerk said, "Weel, Donald, I must e'en come back this gate, and let the game lie ower for the present:" and back he came in October, but not to his old friend's hospitable house; for that gentleman had in the interim been apprehended on a capital charge (of forgery), and his

[1] Westm. (!). [2] Westm. omits *his*. [3] 1869, *ermine*.

name stood on the *Porteous Roll*, or list of those who were about to be tried under his former guest's auspices. The laird was indicted and tried accordingly, and the jury returned a verdict of *guilty*. Braxfield forthwith put on his cocked hat (which answers to the black cap in England), and pronounced the sentence of the law in the usual terms—"To be hanged by the neck until you be dead; and may the Lord have mercy upon your unhappy soul!" Having concluded this awful formula in his most sonorous cadence, Braxfield, dismounting his formidable beaver, gave a familiar nod to his unfortunate acquaintance, and said to him in a sort of chuckling whisper, "And now, Donald my man, I think I've checkmated you for ance." The Regent laughed heartily at this specimen of Macqueen's brutal humour; and "I' faith, Walter," said he, "this old big-wig seems to have taken things as coolly as my tyrannical self. Don't you remember Tom Moore's description of me at breakfast—

> "The table spread with tea and toast,
> Death-warrants and the *Morning Post?*"

'Towards midnight, the Prince called for "a bumper, with all the honours, to the Author of Waverley;" and looked significantly, as he was charging his own glass, to Scott. Scott seemed somewhat puzzled for a moment, but instantly recovering himself, and filling his glass to the brim, said, "Your Royal Highness looks as if you thought I had some claim to the honours of this toast. I have no such pretensions; but shall take good care that the real Simon Pure hears of the high compliment that has now been paid him." He then drank-off his claret; and joined with a stentorian voice in the cheering, which the Prince himself timed. But before the company could resume their seats, his Royal Highness,[1] "Another of the same, if you please, to the Author of Marmion,—and now, Walter my man, I have checkmated you for *ance*." The second bumper was followed by cheers still more prolonged: and Scott then rose, and returned thanks in a short address, which struck the Lord Chief Commissioner as "alike grave and

[1] Westm. inserts *exclaimed*.

graceful." This story has been circulated in a very perverted shape.' * * * 'Before he left town he again dined at Carlton House, when the party was a still smaller one than before, and the merriment if possible still more free. That nothing might be wanting, the Prince sang several capital songs.'

Or take, at a very great interval in many senses, this glimpse of another dinner, altogether *un*officially and much better described. It is James Ballantyne the printer and publisher's dinner, in St. John Street, Canongate, Edinburgh, on the birtheve of a Waverley Novel:

'The feast was, to use one of James's own favourite epithets,[1] *gorgeous;* an aldermanic display of turtle and venison, with the[2] suitable accompaniments of iced punch, potent ale, and generous Madeira. When the cloth was drawn, the burly præses arose, with all he could muster of the port of John Kemble, and spouted with a sonorous voice the formula of Macbeth,

" Fill full!
I drink to the general joy of the whole table! "

This was followed by " the King, God bless him! " and second came— " Gentlemen, there is another toast which never has been nor shall be omitted in this house of mine: I give you the health of Mr. Walter Scott, with three times three! " All honour having been done to this health, and Scott having briefly thanked the company, with some expressions of warm affection to[3] their host, Mrs. Ballantyne retired;— the bottles passed round twice or thrice in the[4] usual way; and then James rose once more, every vein on his brow distended; his eyes solemnly fixed on vacancy, to propose, not as before in his stentorian key, but with " 'bated breath," in the sort of whisper by which a

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[1] Westm. *phrases.*
[2] Westm. omits *the.*
[3] Westm. *for.*
[4] Westm. *their.*

stage-conspirator thrills the gallery,—"*Gentlemen, a bumper to the immortal Author of Waverley!*"—The uproar of cheering, in which Scott made a fashion of joining, was succeeded by deep silence; and then Ballantyne proceeded—

> "In his Lord-Burleigh look, serene and serious,
> A something of imposing and mysterious"—

to lament the obscurity, in which his illustrious but too modest correspondent still chose to conceal himself from the plaudits of the world; to thank the company for the manner in which the *nominis umbra* had been received; and to assure them that the Author of Waverley would, when informed of the circumstance, feel highly delighted [1]—"the proudest hour of his life," &c. &c. The cool, demure fun of Scott's features during all this mummery was perfect; and Erskine's attempt [2] at a gay *nonchalance* was still more ludicrously meritorious. Aldiborontiphoscophornio, however, bursting as he was, knew too well to allow the new Novel to be made the subject of discussion. Its name was announced, and success to it crowned another cup; but after that, no more of Jedediah. To cut the thread, he rolled out unbidden some one of his many theatrical songs, in a style that would have done no dishonour to almost any orchestra—*The Maid of Lodi*, or perhaps *The Bay of Biscay, O!*—or *The sweet little cherub that sits up aloft.* Other toasts followed, interspersed with ditties from other performers; old George Thomson, the friend of Burns, was ready, for one, with *The Moorland Wedding*, or *Willie brew'd a peck o' maut;*—and so it went on, until Scott and Erskine, with any clerical or very staid personage that had chanced to be admitted, saw fit to withdraw. Then the scene was changed. The claret and olives made way for broiled bones and a mighty bowl of punch; and when a few glasses of the hot beverage had restored his powers, James opened *ore rotundo* on the merits of the forthcoming Romance. "One chapter—one chapter only!" was the cry. After "*Nay, by'r Lady, nay!*" and a few more coy chifts, the proof-sheets

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[1] Westm. *gratified.* [2] Westm. *attempts.*

were at length produced, and James, with many a prefatory hem, read aloud what he considered as the most striking dialogue they contained.

'The first I heard so read was the interview between Jeanie Deans, the Duke of Argyle and Queen Caroline, in Richmond Park; and, notwithstanding some spice of the pompous tricks to which he was addicted, I must say he did the inimitable scene great justice. At all events, the effect it produced was deep and memorable; and no wonder that the exulting typographer's *one bumper more to Jedediah Cleishbotham* preceded his parting-stave, which was uniformly *The Last Words of Marmion*, executed certainly with no contemptible rivalry of Braham.'

Over at Abbotsford things wear a still more prosperous aspect. Scott is building there, by the pleasant banks of the Tweed; he has bought and is buying land there; fast as the new gold comes in for a new Waverley Novel, or even faster, it changes itself into moory acres, into stone, and hewn or planted wood:

'About the middle of February' (1820), says Mr. Lockhart, 'it having been ere that time arranged that I should marry his eldest daughter in the course of the spring,—I accompanied him and part of his family on one of those flying visits to Abbotsford, with which he often indulged himself on a Saturday during term. Upon such occasions, Scott appeared at the usual hour in court, but wearing, instead of the official suit of black, his country morning-dress, green jacket and so forth, under the clerk's gown.'—'At noon, when the Court broke up, Peter Mathieson was sure to be in attendance in the Parliament Close; and, five minutes after, the gown had been tossed off; and Scott, rubbing his hands for glee, was under weigh for Tweedside. As we proceeded,' &c.

'Next morning there appeared at breakfast John Ballantyne, who had at this time a shooting or hunting-box a few miles off, in the

vale of the Leader, and with him Mr. Constable, his guest; and it being a fine clear day, as soon as Scott had read the church-service and one of Jeremy Taylor's sermons, we all sallied out before noon on a perambulation of his upland territories; Maida (the hound) and the rest of the favourites accompanying our march. At starting we were joined by the constant henchman, Tom Purdie,—and I may save myself the trouble of any attempt to describe his appearance, for his master has given us an inimitably true one in introducing a certain personage of his Red-gauntlet:—"He was, perhaps, sixty years old; yet his brow was not much furrowed, and his jet-black hair was only grizzled, not whitened, by the advance of age. All his motions spoke strength unabated; and, though rather undersized, he had very broad shoulders, was square-made, thin-flanked, and apparently combined in his frame muscular strength and activity; the last somewhat impaired, perhaps, by years, but the first remaining in full vigour. A hard and harsh countenance; eyes far sunk under projecting eyebrows, which were grizzled like his hair; a wide mouth, furnished from ear to ear with a range of unimpaired teeth of uncommon whiteness, and a size and breadth which might have become the jaws of an ogre, completed this delightful portrait." Equip this figure in Scott's cast-off green jacket, white hat and drab trousers; and imagine that years of kind treatment, comfort and the honest consequence of a confidential *grieve* had softened away much of the hardness and harshness originally impressed on the visage by anxious penury, and the sinister habits of a *black-fisher*;—and the Tom Purdie of 1820 stands before us.

'We were all delighted to see how completely Scott had recovered his bodily vigour, and none more so than Constable, who, as he puffed and panted after him, up one ravine and down another, often stopped to wipe his forehead, and remarked, that "it was not every author who should lead him such a dance." But Purdie's face shone with rapture as he observed how severely the swag-bellied bookseller's activity was tasked. Scott exclaimed exultingly, though, perhaps, for the tenth time, "This will be a glorious spring for our trees, Tom!"—"You may say that, Sheriff," quoth Tom,—and then lingering a

moment for Constable—" My certy," he added, scratching his head, " and I think it will be a grand season for *our buiks* too." But indeed Tom always talked of *our buiks*, as if they had been as regular products of the soil as *our aits* and *our birks*. Having threaded first the Hexilcleugh and then the Rhymer's Glen, we arrived at Huntly Burn, where the hospitality of the kind *Weird Sisters*, as Scott called the Miss Fergusons, reanimated our exhausted bibliopoles, and gave them courage to extend their walk a little farther down the same famous brook. Here there was a small cottage in a very sequestered situation ' (named Chiefswood), ' by making some little additions to which Scott thought it might be converted into a suitable summer residence for his daughter and future son-in-law.' * * * ' As we walked homeward, Scott being a little fatigued, laid his left hand on Tom's shoulder, and leaned heavily for support, chatting to his " Sunday pony," as he called the affectionate fellow, just as freely as [1] with the rest of the party; and Tom put-in his word shrewdly and manfully, and grinned and grunted whenever the joke chanced to be within his apprehension. It was easy to see that his heart swelled within him from the moment the Sheriff got his collar in his gripe.'

That Abbotsford became infested to a great degree with tourists, wonder-hunters, and all that fatal species of people, may be supposed. Solitary Ettrick saw itself populous: all paths were beaten with the feet and hoofs of an endless miscellany of pilgrims. As many as ' sixteen parties ' have arrived at Abbotsford in one day; male and female; peers, Socinian preachers, whatsoever was distinguished, whatsoever had love of distinction in it! Mr. Lockhart thinks there was no literary shrine ever so bepilgrimed, except Ferney in Voltaire's time, who, however, was

[1] Westm. inserts *he did*.

not half so accessible. A fatal species! These are what Schiller calls 'the flesh-flies;' buzzing swarms of bluebottles, who never fail where any taint of human glory or other corruptibility is in the wind. So has Nature decreed. Scott's *healthiness*, bodily and mental, his massive solidity of character nowhere showed itself more decisively than in his manner of encountering this part of his fate. That his bluebottles were blue, and of the usual tone and quality, may be judged. Hear Captain Basil Hall (in a very compressed state):

'We arrived in good time, and found several other guests at dinner. The public rooms are lighted with oil-gas, in a style of extraordinary splendour. The' &c.—'Had I a hundred pens, each of which at the same time should separately write down an anecdote, I could not hope to record one-half of those which our host, to use Spenser's expression, "welled out alway."'—'Entertained us all the way with an endless string of anecdotes;'—'came like a stream of poetry from his lips;'—'path muddy and scarcely passable, yet I do not remember ever to have seen any place so interesting as the skill of this mighty magician had rendered this narrow ravine.'—'Impossible to touch on any theme, but straightway he has an anecdote to fit it.'—'Thus we strolled along, borne, as it were, on the stream of song and story.'—'In the evening we had a great feast indeed. Sir Walter asked us if we had ever read Christabel.'—'Interspersed with these various readings were some hundreds of stories, some quaint, some pathetical.'—'At breakfast today we had, as usual, some 150 stories—God knows how they came in.'—'In any man so gifted—so qualified to take the loftiest, proudest line at the head of the literature, the taste, the imagination of the whole world!'—'For instance, he never sits at any particular place at table, but takes' &c. &c.

Among such worshippers, arriving in 'sixteen parties 'a-day,' an ordinary man might have grown buoyant; have felt the god, begun to nod, and seemed to shake the spheres. A slightly splenetic man, possessed of Scott's sense, would have swept his premises clear of them: Let no bluebottle approach here, to disturb a man in his work,—under pain of sugared *squash* (called quassia) and king's yellow! The good Sir Walter, like a quiet brave man, did neither. He let the matter take its course; enjoyed what was enjoyable in it; endured what could not well be helped; persisted meanwhile in writing his daily portion of romance-*copy*, in preserving his composure of heart;—in a word, accommodated himself to this loud-buzzing environment, and made it serve him, as he would have done (perhaps with more ease) to a silent, poor and solitary one. No doubt it affected him too, and in the lamentablest way fevered his internal life, though he kept it well down; but it affected him *less* than it would have done almost any other man. For his guests were not all of the bluebottle sort; far from that. Mr. Lockhart shall furnish us with the brightest aspect a British Ferney ever yielded, or is like to yield: and therewith we will quit Abbotsford and the dominant and culminant period of Scott's life:

'It was a clear, bright September morning, with a sharpness in the air that doubled the animating influence of the sunshine, and all was in readiness for a grand coursing-match on Newark Hill. The only

guest who had chalked-out other sport for himself was the stanchest of anglers, Mr. Rose; but he too was there on his *shelty*, armed with his salmon-rod and landing-net, and attended by his Hinves, and Charlie Purdie, a brother of Tom, in those days the most celebrated fisherman of the district. This little group of Waltonians, bound for Lord Somerville's preserve, remained lounging about, to witness the start of the main cavalcade. Sir Walter, mounted on Sibyl, was marshalling the order of procession with a huge hunting-whip; and among a dozen frolicsome youths and maidens, who seemed disposed to laugh at all discipline, appeared, each on horseback, each as eager as the youngest sportsman in the troop, Sir Humphry Davy, Dr. Wollaston, and the patriarch of Scottish belles-lettres, Henry Mackenzie. The Man of Feeling, however, was persuaded with some difficulty to resign his steed for the present to his faithful negro follower, and to join Lady Scott in the sociable, until we should reach the ground of our *battue*. Laidlaw, on a strong-tailed wiry Highlander, yclept *Hoddin Grey*, which carried him nimbly and stoutly, although his feet almost touched the ground as he sat, was the adjutant. But the most picturesque figure was the illustrious inventor of the safety-lamp. He had come for his favourite sport of angling, and had been practising it successfully with Rose, his travelling companion, for two or three days preceding this; but he had not prepared for coursing fields, or had left Charlie Purdie's troop for Sir Walter's on a sudden thought, and his fisherman's costume—a brown hat with flexible brim, surrounded with line upon line of catgut, and innumerable fly-hooks—jack-boots worthy of a Dutch smuggler, and a fustian surtout dabbled with the blood of salmon, made a fine contrast with the smart jackets, white-cord breeches, and well-polished jockey-boots of the less distinguished cavaliers about him. Dr. Wollaston was in black; and with his noble serene dignity of countenance might have passed for a sporting archbishop. Mr. Mackenzie, at this time in the 76th year of his age, with a white hat turned up with green, green spectacles, green jacket, and long brown leathern gaiters buttoned upon his nether anatomy, wore a dog-whistle round his neck, and had, all over, the air of as resolute a devotee as the gay captain of Huntly Burn. Tom Purdie and his

subalterns had preceded us by a few hours with all the greyhounds that could be collected at Abbotsford, Darnick, and Melrose; but the giant Maida had remained as his master's orderly, and now gambolled about Sibyl Grey, barking for mere joy like a spaniel puppy.

'The order of march had been all settled, and the sociable was just getting under weigh,[1] when *the Lady Anne* broke from the line, screaming with laughter, and exclaimed, "Papa, papa, I knew you could never think of going without your pet!" Scott looked round, and I rather think there was a blush as well as a smile upon his face, when he perceived a little black pig frisking about his pony, and evidently a self-elected addition to the party of the day. He tried to look stern, and cracked his whip at the creature, but was in a moment obliged to join in the general cheers. Poor piggy soon found a strap round its neck, and was dragged into the background;—Scott, watching the retreat, repeated with mock pathos the first verse of an old pastoral song—

"What will I do gin my hoggie die?
My joy, my pride, my hoggie!
My only beast, I had na mae.
And wow! but I was vogie!"

—the cheers were redoubled—and the squadron moved on.

'This pig had taken, nobody could tell how, a most sentimental attachment to Scott, and was constantly urging its pretensions to be admitted a regular member of his *tail* along with the greyhounds and terriers: but, indeed, I remember him suffering another summer under the same sort of pertinacity on the part of an affectionate hen. I leave the explanation for philosophers;—but such were the facts. I have too much respect for the vulgarly caluminated donkey, to name him in the same category of pets with the pig and the hen; but a year or two after this time, my wife used to drive a couple of these animals in a little garden-chair, and whenever her father appeared at the door of our cottage, we were sure to see Hannah More and Lady Morgan (as Anne Scott had wickedly christened them) trotting from their

[1] Westm. *way* (the correct expression); but 'weigh' in Lockhart.

pasture, to lay their noses over the paling, and, as Washington Irving says of the old white-haired hedger with the Parisian snuff-box, "to have a pleasant crack wi' the laird."

'There' at Chiefswood 'my wife and I spent this summer and autumn of 1821; the first of several seasons which will ever dwell on my memory as the happiest of my life. We were near enough Abbotsford to partake as often as we liked of its brilliant and constantly varying society; yet could do so without being exposed to the worry and exhaustion of spirit which the daily reception of new-comers entailed upon all the family, except Sir Walter himself. But, in truth, even he was not always proof against the annoyances connected with such a style of open housekeeping. Even his temper sank sometimes under the solemn applauses of learned dulness, the vapid raptures of painted and periwigged dowagers, the horse-leech avidity with which underbred foreigners urged their questions, and the pompous simpers of condescending magnates. When sore beset at home in this way, he would every now and then discover that he had some very particular business to attend to on an outlying part of his estate; and, craving the indulgence of his guests over-night, appear at the cabin in the glen before its inhabitants were astir in the morning. The clatter of Sibyl Grey's hoofs, the yelping of Mustard and Spice, and his own joyous shout of *réveillée* under our windows, were the signal that he had burst his toils, and meant for that day to "take his ease in his inn." On descending, he was to be found seated with all his dogs and ours about him, under a spreading ash that overshadowed half the bank between the cottage and the brook, pointing the edge of his woodman's axe, and listening to Tom Purdie's lecture touching the plantation that most needed thinning. After breakfast he would take possession of a dressing-room upstairs, and write a chapter of *The Pirate;* and then, having made-up and despatched his packet for Mr. Ballantyne, away to join Purdie wherever the foresters were at work—and sometimes to labour among them as strenuously as John Swanston—until it was time either to rejoin his own party at Abbotsford, or the quiet circle of the cottage. When his guests were few and friendly, he often made them come over and meet him at Chiefswood in a body towards evening;

and surely he never appeared to more amiable advantage than when helping his young people with their little arrangements upon such occasions. He was ready with all sorts of devices to supply the wants of a narrow establishment; he used to delight particularly in sinking the wine in a well under the *brae* ere he went out, and hauling up the basket just before dinner was announced,—this primitive device being, he said, what he had always practised when a young housekeeper, and in his opinion far superior in its results to any application of ice: and in the same spirit, whenever the weather was sufficiently genial, he voted for dining out of doors altogether, which at once got rid of the inconvenience of very small rooms, and made it natural and easy for the gentlemen to help the ladies, so that the paucity of servants went for nothing.'

Surely all this is very beautiful; like a picture of Boccaccio's: [1] the ideal of a country life in our time. Why could it not last? Income was not wanting: Scott's official permanent income was amply adequate to meet the expense of all that was valuable in it; nay, of all that was not harassing, senseless and despicable. Scott had some 2,000*l.* a-year without writing books at all. Why should he manufacture and not create, to make more money; and rear mass on mass for a dwelling to himself, till the pile toppled, sank crashing, and buried him in its ruins, when he had a safe pleasant dwelling ready of its own accord? Alas, Scott, with all his health, was *infected;* sick of the fearfulest malady, that of Ambition! To such length had the King's baronetcy, the world's favour and 'sixteen 'parties a-day,' brought it with him. So the inane

[1] Westm. *Boccaccio.*

racket must be kept up, and rise ever higher. So masons labour, ditchers delve; and there is endless, altogether deplorable correspondence about marble-slabs for tables, wainscoting of rooms, curtains and [1] the trimmings of curtains, orange-coloured or fawn-coloured: Walter Scott, one of the gifted of the world, whom his admirers call the most gifted, must kill himself that he may be a country gentleman, the founder of a race of Scottish lairds. [2] It is one of the strangest, most tragical histories ever enacted under this sun. So poor a passion can lead so strong a man into such mad extremes. Surely, were not man a fool always, one might say there was something eminently distracted in this, *end* as it would, of a Walter Scott writing daily with the ardour of a steam-engine, that he might make 15,000*l.* a-year, and buy upholstery with it. To cover the walls of a stone house in Selkirkshire with nicknacks, ancient armour and genealogical shields, what can we name it but a being bit with delirium of a kind? That tract after tract of moorland in the shire of Selkirk should be joined together on parchment and by ring-fence, and named after one's name,—why, it is a shabby small-type edition of your vulgar Napoleons, Alexanders, and conquering heroes, not counted venerable by any teacher of men!—

> 'The whole world was not half so wide
> To Alexander when he cried

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[1] Westm. *with*. [2] 1869, new par.

Because he had but one to subdue,
As was a narrow paltry tub to
Diogenes; who ne'er was said,
For aught that ever I could read,
To whine, put finger i' the eye and sob,
Because he had ne'er another tub.'

Not he! And if, 'looked at from the Moon, which 'itself is far from Infinitude,' Napoleon's dominions were as small as mine, *what*, by any chance of possibility, could Abbotsford landed-property ever have become? As the Arabs say, there is a black speck, were it no bigger than a bean's eye, in every soul; which, once set it a-working, will overcloud the whole man into darkness and quasi-madness, and hurry him balefully into Night!

With respect to the literary character of these Waverley Novels, so extraordinary in their commercial character, there remains, after so much reviewing, good and bad, little that it were profitable at present to say. The great fact about them is, that they were faster written and better paid for than any other books in the world. It must be granted, moreover, that they have a worth far surpassing what is usual in such cases; nay, that if Literature had no task but that of harmlessly amusing indolent languid men, here was the very perfection of Literature; that a man, here more emphatically than ever elsewhere, might fling himself back, exclaiming, "Be mine to lie on this sofa, and read everlasting Novels of Walter Scott!" The composi-

tion, slight as it often is, usually hangs together in some measure, and *is* a composition. There is a free flow of narrative, of incident and sentiment; an easy masterlike coherence throughout, as if it were the free dash of a master's hand, 'round as the O of Giotto.' It is the perfection of extemporaneous writing. Farthermore, surely he were a blind critic who did not recognise here a certain genial sunshiny freshness and picturesqueness; paintings both of scenery and figures, very graceful, brilliant, occasionally full of grace and glowing brightness blended in the softest composure; in fact, a deep sincere love of the beautiful in Nature and Man, and the readiest faculty of expressing this by imagination and by word. No fresher paintings of Nature can be found than Scott's; hardly anywhere a wider sympathy with man. From Davie Deans up to Richard Cœur-de-Lion; from Meg Merrilies to Die Vernon and Queen Elizabeth! It is the utterance of a man of open soul; of a brave, large, free-seeing man, who has a true brotherhood with all men. In joyous picturesqueness and fellow-feeling, freedom of eye and heart; or to say it in a word, in general *healthiness* of mind, these Novels prove Scott to have been amongst the foremost writers.

Neither in the higher and highest excellence, of drawing character, is he at any time altogether deficient; though at no time can we call him, in the best sense, successful. His Baillie Jarvies, Dinmonts,

Dalgettys (for their name is legion), do look and talk like what they give themselves out for; they are, if not *created* and made poetically alive, yet deceptively *enacted* as a good player might do them. What more is wanted, then? For the reader lying on a sofa, nothing more; yet for another sort of reader, much. It were a long chapter to unfold the difference in drawing a character between a Scott and a Shakspeare, a Goethe. Yet it is a difference literally immense; they are of different species; the value of the one is not to be counted in the coin of the other. We might say in a short word, which means a long matter, that your Shakspeare fashions his characters from the heart outwards; your Scott fashions them from the skin inwards, never getting near the heart of them! The one set become living men and women; the other amount to little more than mechanical cases, deceptively painted automatons. Compare Fenella with Goethe's Mignon, which, it was once said, Scott had 'done Goethe the honour' to borrow. He has borrowed what he could of Mignon. The small stature, the climbing talent, the trickiness, the *mechanical case*, as we say, he has borrowed; but the soul of Mignon is left behind. Fenella is an unfavourable specimen for Scott; but it illustrates in the aggravated state, what is traceable in all the characters he drew. [1] To the same purport indeed we are to say

[1] 1869, new par.

that these famed books are altogether addressed to the every-day mind; that for any other mind there is next to no nourishment in them. Opinions, emotions, principles, doubts, beliefs, beyond what the intelligent country gentleman can carry along with him, are not to be found. It is orderly, customary, it is prudent, decent; nothing more. One would say, it lay not in Scott to give much more; getting out of the ordinary range, and attempting the heroic, which is but seldom the case, he falls almost at once into the rose-pink sentimental,—descries the Minerva Press from afar, and hastily quits that course; for none better than he knew it to lead nowhither. On the whole, contrasting *Waverley*, which was carefully written, with most of its followers, which were written extempore, one may regret the extempore method. Something very perfect in its kind might have come from Scott; nor was it a low kind: nay, who knows how high, with studious self-concentration, he might have gone; what wealth Nature had implanted in him, which his circumstances, most unkind while seeming to be kindest, had never impelled him to unfold?

But after all, in the loudest blaring and trumpeting of popularity, it is ever to be held in mind, as a truth remaining true forever, that Literature *has* other aims than that of harmlessly amusing indolent languid men: or if Literature have them not, then Literature is a very poor affair; and something else must have them

and must accomplish them, with thanks or without thanks; the thankful or thankless world were not long a world otherwise! Under this head there is little to be sought or found in the Waverley Novels. Not profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for edification, for building up or elevating, in any shape! The sick heart will find no healing here, the darkly-struggling heart no guidance: the Heroic that is in all men no divine awakening voice. We say, therefore, that they do not found themselves on deep interests, but on comparatively trivial ones; not on the perennial, perhaps not even on the lasting. In fact, much of the interest of these Novels results from what may be called contrasts of costume. The phraseology, fashion of arms, of dress and life, belonging to one age, is brought suddenly with singular vividness before the eyes of another. A great effect this; yet by the very nature of it, an altogether temporary one. Consider, brethren, shall not we too one day be antiques, and grow to have as quaint a costume as the rest? The stuffed Dandy, only give him *time*, will become one of the wonderfulest mummies. In antiquarian museums, only two centuries hence, the steeple-hat will hang on the next peg to Franks and Company's patent, antiquarians [1] deciding which is uglier: and the Stulz swallow-tail, one may hope, will seem as incredible as any garment that ever made ridiculous the respectable

[1] Westm. *antiquaries.*

back of man. Not by slashed breeches, steeple-hats, buff-belts, or antiquated speech, can romance-heroes continue to interest us; but simply and solely, in the long-run, by being men. Buff-belts and all manner of jerkins and costumes are transitory; man alone is perennial. He that has gone deeper into this than other men, will be remembered longer than they; he that has not, not. Tried under this category, Scott, with his clear practical insight, joyous temper, and other sound faculties, is not to be accounted little,—among the ordinary circulating-library heroes he might well pass for a demi-god. Not little; yet neither is he great; there were greater, more than one or two, in his own age: among the great of all ages, one sees no likelihood of a place for him.

What, then, is the result of these Waverley Romances? Are they to amuse one generation only? One or more! As many generations as they can; but not all generations: ah no, when our swallow-tail has become fantastic as trunk-hose, they will cease to amuse!—Meanwhile, as we can discern, their results have been several-fold. First of all, and certainly not least of all, have they not perhaps had this result: that a considerable portion of mankind has hereby been sated with mere amusement, and set on seeking something better? Amusement in the way of reading can go no farther, can do nothing better, by the power of man; and men ask, Is this what it can do? Scott,

we reckon, carried several things to their ultimatum and crisis, so that change became inevitable: a great service, though an indirect one. [1] Secondly, however, we may say, these Historical Novels have taught all men this truth, which looks like a truism, and yet was as good as unknown to writers of history and others, till so taught: that the bygone ages of the world were actually filled by living men, not by protocols, state-papers, controversies and abstractions of men. Not abstractions were they, not diagrams and theorems; but men, in buff or other coats and breeches, with colour in their cheeks, with passions in their stomach, and the idioms, features and vitalities of very men. It is a little word this; inclusive of great meaning! History will henceforth have to take thought of it. Her faint hearsays of 'philosophy teaching by ex-'perience' will have to exchange themselves everywhere for direct inspection and embodiment: this, and this only, will be counted experience; and till once experience have got in, philosophy will reconcile herself to wait at the door. It is a great service, fertile in consequences, this that Scott has done; a great truth laid open by him;—correspondent indeed to the substantial nature of the man; to his solidity and veracity even of imagination, which, with all his lively discursiveness, was the chracteristic of him.

A word here as to the extempore style of writing,

[1] 1869, new par.

which is getting much celebrated in these days. Scott seems to have been a high proficient in it. His rapidity was extreme; and the matter produced was excellent, considering that: the circumstances under which some of his Novels, when he could not himself write, were dictated, are justly considered wonderful. It is a valuable faculty this of ready writing;[1] nay farther, for Scott's purpose it was clearly the only good mode. By much labour he could not have added one guinea to his copyright; nor could the reader on the sofa have lain a whit more at ease. It was in all ways necessary that these works should be produced rapidly; and, round or not, be thrown off like Giotto's O. But indeed, in all things, writing or other, which a man engages in, there is the indispensablest beauty in knowing *how to get done*. A man frets himself to no purpose; he has not the sleight of the trade; he is not a craftsman, but an unfortunate borer and bungler, if he know not when to have done. Perfection is unattainable; no carpenter ever made a mathematically accurate right-angle in the world; yet all carpenters know when it is right enough, and do not botch it, and lose their wages, by making it too right. Too much painstaking speaks disease in one's mind, as well as too little. The adroit sound-minded man will endeavour to spend on each business approximately what of pains it deserves; and with a conscience void

[1] 1869, ready-writing.

of remorse will dismiss it then. All this in favour of easy writing [1] shall be granted, and, if need were, enforced and inculcated. [2] And yet, on the other hand, it shall not less but more strenuously be inculcated, that in the way of writing, no great thing was ever, or will ever be done with ease, but with difficulty! Let ready-writers with any faculty in them lay this to heart. Is it with ease, or not with ease, that a man shall *do his best*, in any shape; above all, in this shape justly named of 'soul's travail,' working in the deep places of thought, embodying the True out of the Obscure and Possible, environed on all sides with the uncreated False? Not so, now or at any time. The experience of all men belies it; the nature of things contradicts it. Virgil and Tacitus, were they ready-writers? The whole *Prophecies of Isaiah* are not equal in extent to this cobweb of a Review Article. Shakespeare, we may fancy, wrote with rapidity; but not till he had thought with intensity: long and sore had this man thought, as the seeing eye may discern well, and had dwelt and wrestled amid dark pains and throes,—though his great soul is silent about all that. It was for him to write rapidly at fit intervals, being ready to do it. And herein truly lies the secret of the matter: such swiftness of mere writing, after due energy of preparation, is doubtless the right method; the hot furnace having long worked and simmered,

[1] 1869, easy-writing. [2] 1869, new par.

let the pure gold flow out at one gush. It was Shakspeare's plan; no easy-writer he, or he had never been a Shakspeare. Neither was Milton one of the mob of gentlemen that write with ease; he did not attain Shakspeare's faculty, one perceives, of even writing fast *after* long preparation, but struggled while he wrote. Goethe also tells us he 'had nothing sent him in his sleep;' no page of his but he knew well how it came there. It is reckoned to be the best prose, accordingly, that has been written by any modern. Schiller, as an unfortunate and [1] unhealthy man, '*könnte nie fertig werden*, never could get done;' the noble genius of him struggled not wisely but too well, and wore his life itself heroically out. Or did Petrarch write easily? Dante sees himself 'growing lean' [2] over his *Divine Comedy;* in stern solitary death-wrestle with it, to prevail over it, and do it, if his uttermost faculty may: hence, too, it is done and prevailed over, and the fiery life of it endures forevermore among men. [3] No: creation, one would think, cannot be easy; your Jove has severe pains, and fire-flames, in the head out of which an armed Pallas is struggling! As for manufacture, that is a different matter, and may become easy or not easy, according as it is taken up. Yet of manufacture too, the general truth is that, given the manufacturer, it will be worthy in direct proportion to the pains bestowed upon it;

[1] Westm. omits *and*. [2] Westm. *grey*. [3] 1869, new par.

and worthless always, or nearly so, with no pains. Cease, therefore, O ready-writer, to brag openly of thy rapidity and facility; to thee (if thou be in the manufacturing line) it is a benefit, an increase of wages; but to me it is sheer loss, worsening of my pennyworth: why wilt thou brag of it to me? Write easily, by steam if thou canst contrive it, and canst sell it; but hide it like virtue! "Easy writing," said Sheridan, "is sometimes d—d hard reading." Sometimes; and always it is sure to be rather useless reading, which indeed (to a creature of few years and much work) may be reckoned the hardest of all.

Scott's productive facility amazed everybody; and set Captain Hall, for one, upon a very strange method of accounting for it without miracle;—for which see his Journal, above quoted from. The Captain, on counting line for line, found that he himself had written in that Journal of his almost as much as Scott, at odd hours in a given number of days; 'and as for 'the invention,' says he, 'it is known that this costs 'Scott nothing, but comes to him of its own accord.' Convenient indeed!—But for us too Scott's rapidity is great, is a proof and consequence of the solid health of the man, bodily and spiritual; great, but unmiraculous; not greater than that of many others besides Captain Hall. Admire it, yet with measure. For observe always, there are two conditons in work: let me fix the quality, and *you* shall fix the quantity!

Any man may get through work rapidly who easily satisfies himself about it. Print the *talk* of any man, there will be a thick octavo volume daily; make his writing three times as good as his talk, there will be the third part of a volume daily, which still is good work. To write with never such rapidity in a passable manner, is indicative not of a man's genius, but of his habits; it will prove his soundness of nervous system, his practicality of mind, and in fine, that he has the knack of his trade. In the most flattering view, rapidity will betoken health of mind: much also, perhaps most of all, will depend on health of body. Doubt it not, a faculty of easy-writing is attainable by man! The human genius, once fairly set in this direction, will carry it far. William Cobbett, one of the healthiest of men, was a greater improviser even than Walter Scott: his writing, considered as to quality and quantity, of Rural Rides, Registers, Grammars, Sermons, Peter Porcupines, Histories of Reformation, ever-fresh denouncements of Potatoes and Paper-money, seems to us still more wonderful. Pierre Bayle wrote enormous folios, one sees not on what motive-principle: he flowed-on forever, a mighty tide of ditch-water; and even died flowing, with the pen in his hand. But indeed the most unaccountable ready-writer of all is, probably, the common Editor of a Daily Newspaper. Consider his leading articles; what they treat of, how passably they are done. Straw

that has been thrashed a hundred times without wheat; ephemeral sound of a sound; such portent of the hour as all men have seen a hundred times turn out inane: how a man, with merely human faculty, buckles himself nightly with new vigour and interest to this thrashed straw, nightly thrashes it anew, nightly gets-up new thunder about it; and so goes on thrashing and thundering for a considerable series of years; this is a fact remaining still to be accounted for, in human physiology. The vitality of man is great.

Or shall we say, Scott, among the many things he carried towards their ultimatum and crisis, carried this of ready-writing too, that so all men might better see what was in it? It is a valuable consummation. Not without results;—results, at some of which Scott as a Tory politician would have greatly shuddered. For if once Printing have grown to be as Talk, then Democracy (if we look into the roots of things) is not a bug-bear and probability, but a certainty, and event as good as come! 'Inevitable 'seems it me.' But leaving this, sure enough the triumph of ready-writing appears to be even now; everywhere the ready-writer is found bragging strangely of his readiness. In a late translated *Don Carlos*, one of the most indifferent translations ever done with any sign of ability, a hitherto unknown individual is found assuring his reader, 'The reader

'will possibly think it an excuse, when I assure him 'that the whole piece was completed within the space 'of ten weeks, that is to say, between the sixth of 'January and the eighteenth of March of this year '(inclusive of a fortnight's interruption from over-'exertion); that I often translated twenty pages a-day, 'and that the fifth act was the work of five days.' O hitherto unknown individual, what is it to me what time it was the work of, whether five days or five decades of years? The only question is, How well hast thou done it? [1] So, however, it stands: the genius of Extempore irresistibly lording it, advancing on us like ocean-tides, like Noah's deluges—of ditch-water! The prospect seems one of the lamentablest. To have all Literature swum away from us in watery Extempore, and a spiritual time of Noah supervene? That surely is an awful reflection; worthy of dyspeptic Matthew Bramble in a London fog! Be of comfort, O splenetic Matthew; it is not Literature they are swimming away; it is only Book-publishing and Book-selling. Was there not a Literature *before* Printing or Faust of Mentz, and yet men wrote extempore? Nay, before Writing or Cadmus of Thebes, and yet men spoke extempore? Literature is the Thought of thinking Souls; this, by the blessing of God, can in no generation be swum away, but remains with us to the end.

[1] 1869, new par.

Scott's career, of writing impromptu novels to buy farms with, was not of a kind to terminate voluntarily, but to accelerate itself more and more; and one sees not to what wise goal it could, in any case, have led him. Bookseller Constable's bankruptcy was not the ruin of Scott; his ruin was, that ambition, and even false ambition, had laid hold of him; that his way of life was not wise. Whither could it lead? Where could it stop? New farms there remained ever to be bought, while new novels could pay for them. More and more success but gave more and more appetite, more and more audacity. The impromptu writing must have waxed ever thinner; declined faster and faster into the questionable category, into the condemnable, into the generally condemned. Already there existed, in secret, everywhere a considerable opposition party; witnesses of the Waverley miracles, but unable to believe in them, forced silently to protest against them. Such opposition party was in the sure case to grow; and even, with the impromptu process ever going on, ever waxing thinner, to draw the world over to it. Silent protest must at length have come to words; harsh truths, backed by harsher facts of a world-popularity overwrought and worn-out, behoved to have been spoken;—such as can be spoken now without reluctance, when they can pain the brave man's heart no more. Who knows? Perhaps it was better ordered to be all *otherwise*. Otherwise, at any rate, it

was. One day the Constable mountain, which seemed to stand strong like the other rock mountains, gave suddenly, as the icebergs do, a loud-sounding crack; suddenly, with huge clangor, shivered itself into ice-dust; and sank, carrying much along with it. In one day Scott's high-heaped money-wages became fairy-money and nonentity; in one day the rich man and lord of land saw himself penniless, landless, a bankrupt among creditors.

It was a hard trial. He met it proudly, bravely,—like a brave proud man of the world. Perhaps there had been a prouder way still: to have owned honestly that he *was* unsuccessful, then, all bankrupt, broken, in the world's goods and repute; and to have turned elsewhither for some refuge. Refuge did lie elsewhere; but it was not Scott's course, or fashion of mind, to seek it there. To say, Hitherto I have been all in the wrong, and this my fame and pride, now broken, was an empty delusion and spell of accursed witchcraft! It was difficult for flesh and blood! He said, I will retrieve myself, and make my point good yet, or die for it. Silently, like a proud strong man, he girt himself to the Hercules' task, of removing rubbish-mountains, since that was it; of paying large ransoms by what he could still write and sell. In his declining years, too; misfortune is doubly and trebly unfortunate that befalls us then. Scott fell to his Hercules' task like a very man, and went on with it unweariedly;

with a noble cheerfulness, while his life-strings were cracking, he grappled with it, and wrestled with it, years long, in death-grips, strength to strength;—and *it* proved the stronger; and his life and heart did crack and break: the cordage of a most strong heart! Over these last writings of Scott, his *Napoleons*, *Demonologies*, *Scotch Histories*, and the rest, criticism, finding still much to wonder at, much to commend, will utter no word of blame; this one word only, Woe is me! The noble war-horse that once laughed at the shaking of the spear, how is he doomed to toil himself dead, dragging ignoble wheels! Scott's descent was like that of a spent projectile; rapid, straight down;—perhaps mercifully so. It is a tragedy, as all life is; one proof more that Fortune stands on a restless *globe;* that Ambition, literary, warlike, politic, pecuniary, never yet profited any man.

Our last extract shall be from Volume Sixth; a very tragical one. Tragical, yet still beautiful; waste Ruin's havoc borrowing a kind of sacredness from a yet sterner visitation, that of Death! Scott has withdrawn into a solitary lodging-house in Edinburgh, to do daily the day's work there; and had to leave his wife at Abbotsford in the last stage of disease. He went away silently; looked silently at the sleeping face he scarcely hoped ever to see again. We quote from a Diary he had begun to keep in those months, on hint from Byron's *Ravenna Journal:* copious sections

of it render this Sixth Volume more interesting than any of the former ones :

'*Abbotsford, May* 11 (1826).—* * It withers my heart to think of it, and to recollect that I can hardly hope again to seek confidence and counsel from that ear, to which all might be safely confided. But in her present lethargic state, what would my attendance have availed? —and Anne has promised close and constant intelligence. I must dine with James Ballantyne today *en famille*. I cannot help it; but would rather be at home and alone. However, I can go out too. I will not yield to the barren sense of hopelessness which struggles to invade me.

'*Edinburgh,—Mrs. Brown's lodgings, North St. David Street—May* 12.—I passed a pleasant day with kind J. B., which was a great relief from the black dog, which would have worried me at home. He was quite alone.

'Well, here I am in Arden. And I may say with Touchstone, "When I was at home I was in a better place;" I must, when there is occasion, draw to my own Baillie Nicol Jarvie's consolation—"One cannot carry the comforts of the Saut-Market about with one." Were I at ease in mind, I think the body is very well cared for. Only one other lodger in the house, a Mr. Shandy,—a clergyman, and, despite his name, said to be a quiet one.'

'*May* 14.—A fair good-morrow to you, Mr. Sun, who are shining so brightly on these dull walls. Methinks you look as if you were looking as bright on the banks of the Tweed; but look where you will, Sir Sun, you look upon sorrow and suffering.—Hogg was here yesterday, in danger, from having obtained an accommodation of 100*l.* from James Ballantyne, which he is now obliged to repay. I am unable to help the poor fellow, being obliged to borrow myself.'

'*May* 15.—Received the melancholy intelligence that all is over at Abbotsford.'

'*Abbotsford, May* 16.—She died at nine in the morning, after being very ill for two days—easy at last. I arrived here late last night. Anne is worn out, and has had hysterics, which returned on my arrival. Her broken accents were like those of a child, the language as well as

the tones broken, but in the most gentle voice of submission. "Poor mamma—never return again—gone forever—a better place." Then, when she came to herself, she spoke with sense, freedom and strength of mind, till her weakness returned. It would have been inexpressibly moving to me as a stranger—what was it then to the father and the husband? For myself, I scarce know how I feel; sometimes as firm as the Bass Rock, sometimes as weak as the water that breaks on it. I am as alert at thinking and deciding as I ever was in my life. Yet, when I contrast what this place now is, with what it has been not long since, I think my heart will break. Lonely, aged, deprived of my family—all but poor Anne; an impoverished, an embarrassed man, deprived of the sharer of my thoughts and counsels, who could always talk-down my sense of the calamitous apprehensions which break the heart that must bear them alone.—Even her foibles were of service to me, by giving me things to think of beyond my weary self-reflections.

'I have seen her. The figure I beheld is, and is not my Charlotte —my thirty-years companion. There is the same symmetry of form, though those limbs are rigid which were once so gracefully elastic— but that yellow mask, with pinched features, which seems to mock life rather than emulate it, can it be the face that was once so full of lively expression? I will not look on it again. Anne thinks her little changed, because the latest idea she had formed of her mother is as she appeared under circumstances of extreme pain. Mine go back to a period of comparative ease. If I write long in this way, I shall write-down my resolution, which I should rather write-up, if I could.'

'*May* 18.— * * Cerements of lead and of wood already hold her; cold earth must have her soon. But it is not my Charlotte, it is not the bride of my youth, the mother of my children, that will be laid among the ruins of Dryburgh, which we have so often visited in gaiety and pastime. No, no.'

'*May* 22.— * * Well, I am not apt to shrink from that which is my duty, merely because it is painful; but I wish this funeral-day over. A kind of cloud of stupidity hangs about me, as if all were unreal that men seem to be doing and talking.'

'*May* 26.— * * Were an enemy coming upon my house, would I

not do my best to fight, although oppressed in spirits; and shall a similar despondency prevent me from mental exertion? It shall not, by Heaven!'

'*Edinburgh, May* 30.—Returned to town last night with Charles. This morning resume ordinary habits of rising early, working in the morning, and attending the Court. * * * I finished correcting the proofs for the Quarterly; it is but a flimsy article, but then the circumstances were most untoward.—This has been a melancholy day —most melancholy. I am afraid poor Charles found me weeping. I do not know what other folks feel, but with me the hysterical passion that impels tears is a terrible violence—a sort of throttling sensation—then succeeded by a state of dreaming stupidity, in which I ask if my poor Charlotte can actually be dead.'

This is beautiful as well as tragical. Other scenes, in that Seventh Volume, must come, which will have no beauty, but be tragical only. It is better that we are to end here.

And so the curtain falls; and the strong Walter Scott is with us no more. A possession from him does remain; widely scattered; yet attainable; not inconsiderable. It can be said of him, When he departed, he took a Man's life along with him. No sounder piece of British manhood was put together in that eighteenth century of Time. Alas, his fine Scotch face, with its shaggy honesty, sagacity and goodness, when we saw it latterly on the Edinburgh streets, was all worn with care, the joy all fled from it;—ploughed deep with labour and sorrow. We shall never forget it; we shall never see it again. Adieu, Sir Walter, pride of all Scotchmen, take our proud and sad farewell.

CARLYLE'S NOTES

Page 59. *lilt*, loud tune: German, *lallen*.
Page 86. *grieve*, overseer: German, *graf*.
Page 92. *to have a pleasant crack with the laird*.

On this subject let us report an anecdote furnished by a correspondent of our own, whose accuracy we can depend on: 'I myself 'was acquainted with a little Blenheim cocker, one of the smallest, 'beautifulest and wisest of lap-dogs or dogs, which, though Sir Walter 'knew it not, was very singular in its behaviour towards him. *Shandy*, 'so hight this remarkable cocker, was extremely shy of strangers: 'promenading on Prince's Street, which in fine weather used to be 'crowded in those days, he seemed to live in perpetual fear of being 'stolen; if anyone but looked at him admiringly, he would draw-back 'with angry timidity, and crouch towards his own lady-mistress. One 'day a tall, irregular, busy-looking man came halting by; the little 'dog ran towards him, began fawning, frisking, licking at his feet: 'it was Sir Walter Scott! Had Shandy been the most extensive 'reader of Reviews, he could not have done better. Every time he 'saw Sir Walter afterwards, which was some three or four times in 'the course of visiting Edinburgh, he repeated his demonstrations, 'ran leaping, frisking, licking the author of Waverley's feet. The 'good Sir Walter endured it with good humour; looked down at the 'little wise face, at the silky shag-coat of snow-white and chestnut-'brown; smiled, and avoided hitting him as they went on,—till 'a new division of streets or some other obstacle put an end to the 'interview. In fact he was a strange little fellow, this Shandy. He 'has been known to sit for hours looking out at the summer moon, 'with the saddest, wistfulest expression of countenance; altogether 'like a Werterean Poet. He would have been a poet, I daresay, if

'he could have found a *publisher*. But his moral tact was the most 'amazing. Without reason shown, without word spoken or act done, 'he took his likings and dislikings; unalterable; really almost un- 'erring. His chief aversion, I should say, was to the genus *quack*, 'above all to the genus *acrid-quack;* these, though never so clear- 'starched, bland-smiling and beneficent, he absolutely would have no 'trade with. Their very sugar-cake was unavailing. He said with 'emphasis, as clearly as barking could say it: "Acrid-quack, avaunt!" 'Would to Heaven many a prime-minister, and high person in authority, 'had such an invaluable talent! On the whole, there is more in this 'universe than our philosophy has dreamt of. A dog's instinct is a 'voice of Nature too; and farther, *it* has never babbled itself away 'in idle jargon and hypothesis, but always adhered to the practical, 'and grown in silence by continual communion with fact. We do 'the animals injustice. Their body resembles our body, Buffon says; 'with its four limbs, with its spinal marrow, main organs in the head 'and so forth: but have they not a kind of soul, equally the rude 'draught and imperfect imitation of ours? It is a strange, an almost 'solemn and pathetic thing to see an intelligence imprisoned in that 'dumb rude form; struggling to express itself out of that;—even as 'we do out of our imprisonment; and succeed very imperfectly!'

NOTES

Page 23.—*American Cooper:* James Fenimore Cooper (1789–1851). Novelist.

Old Hickory: General Andrew Jackson, 7th President of the United States.

Greenacre: A murderer, hanged 1837. "I was charmed at your discovering that gallows-expression in Carlyle's picture —I have all along been calling it *Greenacre-Carlyle*." (Mrs. Carlyle, *Letter to Jeannie Welsh*, 18th Jan., 1843.)

Cabriolet: a gig with a hood.

Neat-flies: elegant, light, one-horse vehicles. "What our livery-stable keepers call a neat-fly." (Mrs. Carlyle, *Lett.* II. 393.)

Lions. The application of this term to conspicuous personages is due to the fact that lions were once kept as a spectacle at the Tower of London.

Page 25.—*Gig or no gig.* The gig was Carlyle's pet symbol for the kind of respectability which consists in making a fine appearance in the eyes of your neighbours.

"*Question:* What do you mean by 'respectable'?—*Answer:* He always kept a gig." (At the Trial of Thurtell, a murderer.)

Tendency . . . which some incline to deduce.—"Some" = Carlyle. Compare: "Know that there is in men a quite indestructible Reverence for whatsoever holds of Heaven, or even plausibly counterfeits such holding." (*Sartor Resartus*, Bk. III. ch. vii.)

"*What has been called 'the perpetual fact of hero-worship,'*" *i.e.*, by Carlyle himself. "Hero-worship has existed, and will

for ever exist, universally among Mankind." (*Sartor Resartus*, Bk. III. ch. vii.) C. afterwards enlarged on this theme in *Heroes and Hero-worship*.

Page 26.—"*It remains a blessed fact . . . worship.*" *So it has been written.* It is an idiosyncrasy of Carlyle to present his most striking thoughts and sayings in the guise of a quotation from some imaginary Teufelsdröckh (*Sartor Resartus*) or other character. Such expressions as "it has been written," "it is said," generally show that Carlyle is quoting from a previous work of his own, in substance if not in the precise words. The above is from *Sartor Resartus*, Bk. III. ch. vii.

Ternary, tertiary. "Ternary" usually means 'consisting of threes.'

Page 28.—*Peremptory editorial powers.* "Meanwhile poor Mill looked dolefully anxious that I should not desert him. In brief, I answered that I *would* do that *Scott*." (*Lett. to Dr. Carlyle*, 12th Dec., 1837.)

Page 29.—*It is rashly said*, by Carlyle in his *Essay on Burns*. "What and how produced was the effect of society on him; what and how produced was his effect on society?"

Thomas Ellwood. Milton's Quaker friend who led him to compose *Paradise Regained* by the remark, "Thou hast said much here of Paradise Lost, but what hast thou to say to Paradise Found?" (*Hist. of the Life of Thomas Ellwood.*)

Page 30.—"*Pickwick*" *divided by an unknown integer.* This mathematical problem may be elucidated by the opinion of the *Pickwick Papers* expressed by Carlyle in a letter to John Sterling (28th July, 1837): "Thinner wash, with perceptible vestige of a flavour in it here and there, was never offered to the human palate."

Under all speech . . . silence that is better. A favourite sentiment of Carlyle, unconsciously expressing his instinctive need of a quality in which no man was ever more deficient than himself. "*Sprechen ist silbern, Schweigen ist golden* (Speech is silvern, silence is golden)" (*Sartor Resartus*).

Natty Leatherstocking, a figure that appears under various names in Cooper's novels.

Saint-Pierre (1737–1814). Author of *Paul et Virginie.*

Page 31.—*Colburn and Co.* Publishers of novels.

Io Pæan! Hurrah! "Pæan" was a name of Apollo.

Page 32.—*Hannah More* (1745–1833), a writer of edifying works. Her *Life and Correspondence* by William Roberts.

Page 34.—*Damocles' sword.* To teach D. the sort of happiness enjoyed by tyrants a sword was suspended over his head by a hair, at a banquet given by his master, Dionysius, tyrant of Syracuse.

It has been said . . . Players. By Carlyle (*The Diamond Necklace*).

Page 37.—*The Ballantynes.* James and John Ballantyne were Scott's partners in the firm of Ballantyne & Co. James was an old schoolfellow who, after practising unsuccessfully as a solicitor, had started as a printer. John had been a bank clerk in London, and afterwards had carried on business, unsuccessfully, in Kelso. Lockhart states that "James never understood book-keeping and could not bring himself to attend to it with regularity," and, as for John, "a more reckless, thoughtless, improvident adventurer never rushed into the serious responsibilities of business." Scott used to insist with his publishers, from the beginning, that whatever he wrote or edited should be printed at the Ballantyne press, though his own pecuniary interest in Ballantyne's was not openly admitted. After a quarrel with Constable & Co., Scott supplied the capital for the Ballantyne brothers to start a publishing house. The firm acquired a great deal of unsaleable rubbish and, according to Lockhart, was grossly mismanaged by the brothers, who kept Scott in ignorance of the extent of their borrowings. When insolvency threatened, Scott hurried into novel writing. Constable, the quarrel with whom had been made up, was induced to take a large part of the worthless stock, the inducement being the publication of Scott's

own works. But, in spite of the prodigious financial success of the novels, the affairs of Ballantyne & Co. remained entangled. Finally, a panic in the money market, following a period of wild speculation, caused the failure of Constable's London agents, Hurst and Robinson; and this ruined Constable—"the Napoleon of publishing"—himself, who, according to Lockhart, though in many ways an excellent business man, "hated accounts and systematically refused, during the most vigorous years of his life, to examine or sign a balance sheet." The failure of Constable & Co. brought down the firm of Ballantyne, and Scott, who had been purchasing land at extravagant prices for his estate at Abbotsford, was involved in the ruin. Lockhart, while imputing the disaster principally to the incompetence and insincerity of the brothers Ballantyne, admits that they "loved and reverenced" Scott, and "would have shed their heart's blood in his service." Lockhart's statements did not pass unchallenged. (See: A. Ballantine: *Refutations of the misstatements and calumnies contained in Mr. Lockhart's Life of Sir Walter Scott, respecting the Messrs. Ballantyne*, 1838.) The matter is dealt with in a very lucid and interesting way by Leslie Stephen in *The Story of Scott's Ruin* (*Studies of a Biographer*, Vol. II.). He convicts Lockhart of over-statements. "Scott was not in the position of a mere passenger leaving the command of his ship to an incompetent commander. He was actively superintending and giving orders at every stage of a critical navigation."

Page 40.—*Popularity is a blaze . . . showing what is in him*, etc. Cf. "Fame . . . like light can give little or nothing, but at most may show what is given." (Carlyle, *Goethe*.)

Caput mortuum, worthless residue.

Page 41.—*Farinelli*, a famous singer who visited London in 1734.

Lope de Vega (1562–1635). Spanish dramatist, said to have written 1500 plays.

Writing his "Don Quixote" in prison, Cervantes, according to a legend which Carlyle accepts.

Page 42.—*Kotzebue.* German dramatist, author of plays—now regarded as weak stuff—which were extraordinarily popular in England towards the end of the eighteenth century.

Orcus. The abode of the dead.

Page 44.—*Woe to them . . . Zion.* (Amos, vi. 1.)

Domdaniel: the abode of evil spirits and enchanters in the *Arabian Tales* and in *Thalaba*, a poem by Southey.

Brother Ringletub . . . Ram-Dass. There is more than one Ram-Dass known to history; but I have failed to unearth Brother Ringletub. I suspect him of belonging to the same family as Teufelsdröckh, Sauerteig, and Smelfungus. There was, however, a missionary named W. T. Ringeltaube, born 1770, who went to India and whose name may have suggested "Ringletub" to Carlyle. The Librarian of the India Office informs me that no Ram Dass appears to be mentioned in connection with this Ringeltaube.

Page 45.—"*Friend of humanity*," a name arrogated to himself by the father of the great Mirabeau. "One heard it added with little surprise that this Friend of Man was the enemy of almost every man he had to do with." (Carlyle: *Mirabeau.*) The title is ridiculed by Canning (*The Knife-grinder*), where "Friend of Humanity" is made to say to the needy knife-grinder, "I give thee sixpence! I will see thee damn'd first."

The Transcendentalists. "The Idealist boasts that his Philosophy is Transcendental, that is 'ascending beyond the senses.'" (Carlyle, *Novalis.*)

"*La carrière . . .*," *The tools to him that can handle them.* (*Sartor Resartus*, Bk. II. ch. viii.)

Page 48.—*Walker the "Original"* (1784–1836), a police magistrate and authority on the Art of Dining who published a weekly paper, *The Original*, to raise the national tone.

Page 49.—*William Cobbett* (1762–1835), author of *Rural Rides*, an *English Grammar*, and other works.

Werterism. The term is coined from Goethe's sentimental novel, *The Sorrows of Young Werther.*

"*Beardie*" *of Harden.* "Beardie, my great-grandfather derived his cognomen from his venerable beard." (Scott, *Autobiography.*)

Page 53.—*La Rochefoucault* (1631–1680) wrote *Réflexions et Maximes.*

Page 54.—*John Knox* (1505–1572) sketched in his *First Book of Discipline* a plan of national education.

Hume (1711–1776), the great philosopher. C. has a fine passage in his essay on Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, in which he compares Hume and Johnson: "both great, among the greatest: yet how unlike in likeness!"

Page 55.—*Writer to the Signet*, a solicitor.

Page 59.—*Dandie Dinmont*, in *Guy Mannering.*

Page 60.—Charlieshope, the house of Dandie Dinmont.

Mr. Mitchell, Scott's tutor, who speaks in his *Reminiscences* of Master Walter's "soporific tendency" in church (Lockhart, ch. iii.)

Page 61.—*Monk Lewis.* Matthew Gregory Lewis (1775–1818), author of *The Monk* and other "romances of terror," which have no shudders for the modern reader. He had some influence in kindling the "spark of poetical ambition" in Scott, who contributed to his *Tales of Wonder.*

Page 62.—*Fichte* (1762–1814), German philosopher. He expounded a system of Transcendental Idealism. (See Carlyle's essay on *Novalis.*)

Page 64.—*Cockaigne*, the medieval name for "Lubberland." "A perpetual dream there has been of Paradises, and some luxurious Lubberland where the brooks should run wine, and the trees bend with ready-baked viands." (Carlyle, *Characteristics.*)

Page 67.—*Before fame arrived he had reached the mature age.* Scott was born 1771, died 1832. *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*,

his first important poem, appeared in 1805. He had reached his forty-third year before he began his career as a novelist.

Page 68.—*Jean Paul.* Jean Paul Richter (1763–1825), German writer, several of whose works Carlyle translated.

Phalaris' Bull, the brazen bull in which Phalaris, tyrant of Agrigentum, roasted his victims, including the bull's inventor.

Page 69.—*Vates:* the inspired Bard. "The true Poet is ever, as of old, the Seer." (Carlyle, *Death of Goethe.*)

Page 71.—*Dæmon.* "The thing that is *given* me to do, or to speak, that my inward Daimon as the old times called it commands of me, that I cannot forbear doing or speaking, that let me do or speak." (C. *Lett. to J. S. Mill*, 18th July, 1833.)

Page 72.—"*Last infirmity of noble minds*," "that last infirmity of noble mind." (Milton, *Lycidas.*)

Della-Cruscan. The "Della-Cruscans"—so called because some of them lived in Florence—were versifiers, said Gifford, who "opened the sluice-gates of sentimental slush."

Hayley (1745–1820), of whom it is said that "Everything was good about him except his poetry."

Loves of the Plants, by Erasmus Darwin (1731–1802), grandfather of the great Darwin.

Loves of the Triangles, a parody of the *Loves of the Plants*, written by George Canning for the *Anti-Jacobin.*

Page 74.—*Goethe* (1749–1832), Germany's greatest writer, in whose poetry, in Carlyle's opinion, was embodied "the wisdom that was proper to his time." The "criticism" here mentioned, and the quotation also, were Carlyle's. *Götz von Berlichingen* (1771); *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers* (1774).

Page 76.—*Chateaubriand* (1769–1848), author of *Génie du Christianisme.*

Those glorious wars of ours are but like parish-brawls. Com-

pare the famous passage in *Sartor Resartus*, Bk. II. ch. viii, describing how the inhabitants of the British village of Dumdrudge and those of a French Dumdrudge "blow the souls out of one another. . . ." "Had these men any quarrel? Busy as the Devil is, not the smallest! They lived far enough apart; were the entirest strangers; nay, in so wide a Universe, there was even, unconsciously, by Commerce, some mutual helpfulness between them. How then? Simpleton! their Governors had fallen-out; and, instead of shooting one another, had the cunning to make these poor blockheads shoot."

Page 77.—*Ernulphus' curse*, attributed to Ernulphus, an eleventh-century bishop of Rochester. Used by Dr. Slop in wrath for a cut finger. (Sterne, *Tristram Shandy*, Bk. III. ch. xi.)

Metrical Chivalry Romances . . . declining. The reception of *Rokeby* by the public showed Scott that as a poet he had been partially eclipsed by Byron. His own modest words are, "He beat me out of the field in description of the stronger passions and in deep-seated knowledge of the human heart."

Page 83.—*Præses:* chairman.

John Kemble, a famous actor of the period.

Page 84.—*Aldiborontiphoscophornio*, Scott's nickname for James Ballantyne; John he called "Rigdumfunnidos": names which felicitously suggest the pomposity of the one brother and the levity of the other.

Jedediah Cleishbotham, the imaginary editor of the novels which Scott wrote in the *Tales of My Landlord* series.

Page 85.—*Braham*, a famous singer.

Peter Mathieson, Scott's coachman, brother-in-law of Tom Purdie.

Page 86.—*Personage of his Red-gauntlet:* Cristal Nixon.

Black-fisher: poacher.

Page 87.—*Endless miscellany of pilgrims.* "Scott was the one object of the Abbotsford pilgrims; and evening followed evening only to show him exerting, for their amusement, more of animal spirits, to say nothing of intellectual vigour, than would have been considered by any other man in the company as sufficient for the whole expenditure of a week's existence." (Lockhart, ch. xlix.)

Socinian preachers: Unitarian ministers.

Page 88.—*Captain Basil Hall*, R.N. Lockhart gives copious extracts from his interesting MS. Journal of a Christmas at Abbotsford. Carlyle himself met Hall. "I remember," he says in his *Reminiscences*, "the figure of him in my dim lodging, as a grey, crackling, sniggering spectre, one dusk; endeavouring to seduce me by affability, in lieu of liberal wages"—to go and do some work which Hall was to pass off as his own and thereby gain credit with the Admiralty.

Page 89.—"*Have felt the god*," etc. (Dryden, *Alexander's Feast.*)

Under pain of sugared "squash" (called quassia) and king's yellow. A sweetened infusion of quassia is useful to kill flies; "king's yellow" is arsenic.

Page 91.—*vogie:* merry.

Member of his "tail": retinue.

Lady Morgan (abt. 1778–1859), authoress of *The Wild Irish Girl.*

Page 93.—*Boccaccio* (1313–1375). His *Decameron* has had no small influence on English literature from Chaucer to modern times.

Scott had some £2000 a year . . . books. In a letter to James Ballantyne, written in 1813, Scott gives his income, apart from the proceeds of his books, as £2100 a year. Of this sum his salary as a Clerk of Session was £1300.

Page 94.—*£15000 a-year.* See introduction.

The whole world . . . tub (Butler, *Hudibras*, Pt. I. Canto iii.) " Narrow paltry " should be " paltry narrow " ; " ne'er was " should be " is not."

Page 96.—*O of Giotto* (fourteenth century). The story is that Giotto, being asked to send a specimen of his skill to the Pope, drew a circle of marvellous exactitude.

Pages 96, 97.—*Davie Deans*, in *The Heart of Midlothian ; Richard Cœur-de-Lion* in *Ivanhoe ; Meg Merrilies* in *Guy Mannering ; Die Vernon* in *Rob Roy ; Queen Elizabeth* in *Kenilworth ; Baillie Jarvie* in *Rob Roy ; Dalgetty* in *The Legend of Montrose ; Fenella* in *Peveril of the Peak ; Mignon* in *Wilhelm Meister.*

Page 98.—*Minerva Press*, a printing establishment in Leadenhall Street, London, famous for its trashy, ultra-sentimental novels.

Waverley . . . carefully written. Scott had written a great part of the first volume and sketched other passages, when he mislaid the MS. " and only found it by the merest accident as I was rummaging the drawers of an old cabinet." Scott tells us that " the last two volumes were written in three weeks."

Page 99.—*Franks and Company's patent.* The Librarian at the Patent Office informs me that a patent was granted to Robert Franks, Hat Manufacturer, and another person, in 1820, for the " Manufacture of waterproof hats, of silk, wool, beaver, or other fur, the brims of which are perfectly waterproof, and will preserve their shapes, being stiffened without glue or any material which would prevent the effect of waterproof mixture."

Stulz swallow-tail, a swallow-tail coat of that name.

Page 100.—*Neither is he great.* "[Scott] as a thinker, not feeble—strong, rather, and healthy, yet limited, almost mean and *klein städtisch.*" (Carlyle, *Note Book*, 1832.)

Page 101.—*These Historical Novels . . . truth.* " He under-

stood what *history* meant, this was his chief intellectual merit." (Carlyle, *Note Book*, 1832.)

"*Philosophy teaching by experience*," a favourite *Aunt Sally* of Carlyle.

Page 104.—*Mob of Gentlemen.*

> But of the wits of either Charles's days,
> The mob of gentlemen who wrote with ease.
> —Pope: *Imitations of Horace.* Epistle vi.

Page 105.—"*Easy writing*," *said Sheridan.* From *Clio's Protest* quoted by Moore *Life of Sheridan* Vol. I, 55—

> You write with ease, to show your breeding,
> *But easy writing's curst hard reading.*

Page 106.—*Cobbett . . . a greater improviser.* "Never stop to make choice of words. Put down your thought in words just as they come," is the advice Cobbett gives in his Grammar, apparently in accordance with his own practice.

Pierre Bayle (1647–1706). His *Dictionnaire Historique et Critique* is an important work in the history of Rationalism.

Page 107.—*Don Carlos*, by Schiller.

Page 108.—*Matthew Bramble* in Smollett's *Humphrey Clinker.*

Faust of Mentz . . . Cadmus of Thebes. Names associated with the invention of printing (Faust) and of writing (Cadmus, the legendary inventor of the Greek alphabet). "Who printed thee, for example, this unpretending Volume on the Philosophy of Clothes? Not the Herren Stillschweigen & Company; but Cadmus of Thebes, Faust of Mentz, and innumerable others whom thou knowest not." (*Sartor Resartus*, Bk. III. ch. vii.)

Page 110.—*Fairy-money:* money given by the fairies, which turns into worthless leaves and rubbish.

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